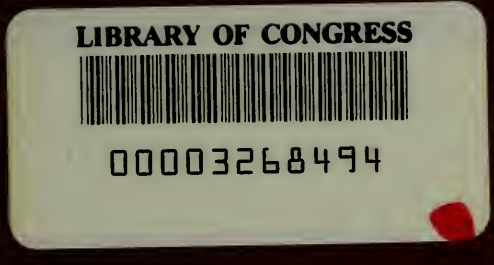
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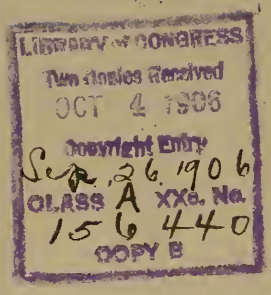

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The Crowded World

THE POET'S DEFENSE.

I see you often smile,
As every little while
I pass your door,
A-saying through your hat,
"What a foolish man is that,
A-seeking lore!"

My ear is pricked for sound,
My head upon the ground
For many a day;
And then my wandering eyes
Are pacing all the skies
Of starry ray.

I see you laugh, I know,
And nudge your partner, so,
As I go 'long,
With hands deep in my pants
A-whistling some old dance
Or lover's song.

Let go your pride who smile,
For every little while
I'm laughing, too,
Because, ah me! you're blind
And not one star can find
Nor pearly dew.

So in our hats we smile,
And thus life's ills beguile—
You both at me,
And I at you, gone mad,
And all the world's made glad
For each of three.

I SMILED.

Alone I sat and smiled
At some odd thoughts I had;
A friend came in and cried, "You're mad;
No man who's sane is thus beguiled!"
Said I, "I knew you never could have known.
I smiled because I was alone."

BROKEN VETERAN OF COMMERCIAL WARS.

After the smoke and roaring and desolation of the battle of middle life,

After long marches and countermarches, privation, dreary, godless skies, and speechless weariness,

After changes and the death of the beloved and all who knew you in your youth,

Will you, broken veteran of commercial wars, turn again to the green fields of your youth?

And though the spoils of war be yours, once more, with the simplicity of childhood, will you plant love in your heart,

Grow gentle and walk again with God over the olden hills and by the still flowing waters,

And be pleased once more to be innocent in your desires and to grow sweetly tender in your heart—you, you, broken veteran of commercial wars?

BABES.

The dimpled cheeks of babes do more
Than vaunted enterprises fraught with lore
To soften this hard world of hate and harsh alarms;
And many a man ne'er served as well as in his mother's arms.

EVENING SONG.

Give me to gladly go
  My way,
  And say
No word of mine own woe;
But let me smile each day.

Give me the strength to do
  My task
  I ask;
And that I shall not rue
The toiler's grimy mask.

Give one loved hand to me,
  And leave
  The eve
All undisturbed as we
Our strength of souls retrieve.

And lastly give sweet sleep,
  Closed sight,
  No fright,
Nor fears that wakeful keep;
And now a sweet good night.

DESIDERATA.

Though work bring naught of power nor wealth,
Spare me from want of common needs,
And give a share of manly health,
A few good friends of honest deeds;
And till death's peaceful slumber nears,
A life of undishonored years.

THE WORLD'S NEWBORN TODAY.

The world's newborn today;
And who will walk today with open eyes
Will find amid the old some faint surprise,
A thousand years the earth has crept along—
A thousand, thousand years, and song
Nor numbers infinite can say
What long eons are still upon it's way;
And yet the world's newborn today.

The world's newborn today;
And who will dream today and bear men's sneers;
And work amid his silent, bitter tears,
And turn no eye upon the flaunting crowd,
But keep his spirit clean, not proud;
He shall yet live to see some ray
Gleam o'er his troubled night of wild dismay,
Because the world's newborn today.

The world's newborn today;
And some will wildly pray and toil to leap
Afar in time and place, and some will weep
In quest of life's one aim; but he's a seer
Who'll calmly walk and see and hear
'Within the things that 'round him stay
His chance for sweetest life without delay,
And know the world's newborn today.

I PONDER O'ER LOVE.

I ponder o'er love and o'er death,
O'er fame and unrequitted toil,
O'er placid young men and young women
Dreaming in the day of their dreams,
O'er hard-headed men of trade,
And the public cheat held in high esteem,
O'er the patient artist buying with his youth
That which he shall gain in age
But cannot enjoy, the day of pleasure being past;
O'er the young nun, barred from the world,
Yet bound by nature to be still a woman;
I ponder o'er the tragedy of idealists,
Living in a world of bog;
O'er ministers grown larger than their doctrine,
O'er the chance-taker who has lost,
And o'er him who has won,
O'er proud, beautiful, idle women,
And humble, ugly, toiling ones,

O'er the tired worker in the shop,
And the master of the shop,
O'er solitary women who sit in gloom,
O'er the bride and the bridegroom
And the secret chamber that is theirs,
O'er the dead love of them that still live,
O'er the mystery of the mother's love,
And the agony of ungrateful children loved,
O'er lonely sailors out at sea,
Ever watching the dead, dead waters,
O'er soul-poisoned kings of nations and gold;
I ponder o'er myself, indifferent just,
Breathless in the roaring sea of time.—
Let me forgive much, forget more;
Let me close my eyes and fall half asleep,
That the pictures may grow softer and stiller,
And the life, O thou God! again grow gentle.

THE GREATER HEROISM.

Work as if thy task were made for thee;
Be strong as if thou hadst courage,
And charitable as if thou hadst been rewarded;
Remain poor if riches are dishonorable,
And carry poverty with the dignity of virtue.
When others dine sumptuously, eat thy crust;
Let love be thy guide and justice thy God—
Not for thyself alone, but for all men.
Pursuing these things thou wilt be misjudged
And, in the gloaming of thy days, forgotten;
Then, uncomplaining, lie thou down at even,
Cheered by the love in thy heart,
And by the full-grown soul of thy charity;
Then hast thou won the heroic battle,
Yet not stained the sweet earth with blood;
But in the garden of love and sacrifice,
Hast thou planted serenely growing flowers,
That shall still blow when thou dost slumber
In the shadow-land of dreamless sleep.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S DELIVERANCE.

If it were man's sweet privilege,
I should have cried. All day I've tried
To solve the thing and meaning bring
Into the thousand daily facts
That constitute our varied acts.

And now the evening's falling,
And darkness grows; and human woes
That seemed at noon so small, by moon
Appear a giant's awful size
In fearsome, weird, fantastic, wild disguise.

My whole philosophy is
Then subject to the light and hue
Of things around and every sound.
What's true today seems tomorrow false—
Enough! Tonight I'll dress, dine out, and waltz.

YOU WHO WRANGLE WITH ME AT THE MART.

You who see the worst of me,
Who wrangle with me at the mart,
Who discuss prices with me, pro and con—
Do you condemn me?

I do not condemn you,
For you are a chattel like myself,
Answering the necessities of the day—
You who wrangle with me at the mart.

Underneath the wrinkled face,
You have to me a gentle face,
And between the rough words,
I hear your other voice—kind and low;

This I remember, forgetting all else;
For this shall I hear again,
And shall know in the after-dawn
That glows beyond this dead sea of trifles.

O PASSER-BY!

O passer-by, O passer-by!
Have you good words of me
Upon your lips as I draw nigh
To you each day?
If so, I beg
That you'd them say,
For soon I'm gone and cannot hear,
So speak the kindly word
I beg and smile while yet I'm near.
I'd speak to you,
If courage came,
And I quite knew
You'd take the love my heart oft sends,
And give me yours as well—
O passer-by, come let's be friends!
Life's smiles and tears
And happiness
And childish fears
Are mine, just like your own each day,
(You understand I know.)
So come and let's be friends I say.

THE DISHONORED POET.

Full oft alone at night he sang a song
The world sang gladly after him, and long
Remembered it; for on Parnassus Mount
He dwelt with dreams beside the muses' fount,
And knew the fairy paths that spirits walk.—
Then shame, defender's and accuser's talk,
Then silent all. His monstrous name is hid
As if of it the world itself would rid.
O thou whom men call God! did thy hand shake
As from the formless void of things to make
This life thou gatheredst thy materials strange,
And in this crooked shape didst them arrange?
Where sentest thou his double soul to dwell—
With its sweet songs to heaven, or deeds to hell?

TO A POET.

Ambitious true it is in you
To hope that it be said,
When life is past and you at last
Lie still and newly dead:

"The days are run of this sweet son
Who failed in worldly strife,
Was poorly clad, but wandered glad
Along the paths of life;
For open wide on every side
His heart had many a door,
And they that knocked found them unlocked,
And saw there evermore
As rich a world as love unfurled
In any human breast;
And none were lost and none were crossed
And every one was blest."

Ambitious true it is in you
To hope that this be said,
When life is past and you at last
Lie still and newly dead.

Yet on and on, from youth's clear dawn
Till life's still evening rays,
The battered heart would backward start
To march the withered ways,
If there were not among the lot
Of all the peaceful dead
Some lofty souls who'd paid life's tolls
Of whom such words are said.

WALK SWEETLY.

Walk sweetly through this noisy place,
O thou with pliant soul!
And learn to go with thankful heart
As onward seasons roll.

And though 'tis human fate to fail,
'Tis great to hold still fast
To that one thing thou lovest best,
For it alone will last.

And though the shadows on thee fall,
If thou art gentle still
And calmly walk with thankful heart,
Thou'st done the Master's will.

And next the laugh of happy maids,
An old man's smile is best—
The greatest triumph in the world—
And surely it is blest.

I KNOW.

And will you put the verse aside
Because you've tried
To all the measure of your strength?
And ask at length,
Why should you follow words like these—
Whose wish to please?
And are you tired—your courage low?—
I know.

These words are dead, they clothe you not,
Nor fill the lot
Of pressing needs that steal your days
Till evening's rays.
You will not read—nor have the time?
You say I rhyme
With selfishness and pride aglow?
I know.

And true it is these words are dead;
No cloth they spread,
Nor shelter bring to you at night,
Nor gold by light
Of morning when perchance you stray
So still away
From strangers' doors in spirits low—
I know.

The strong man's hopeless work of years,
His inward tears;
The dying youth of her unwooed,
Her solitude;
The broken heart's unseen distress,
Its sleeplessness;
The honored now and dishonored so—
I know.

Where'er you are, my brother dear,
I'd bring you cheer;
And you of full-blown maiden's grace,
And you of face
All warped and drawn in time's caprice,
I'd bring you peace.
In secret longing all you go—
I know.

I've dined in good men's gracious halls;
I've heard the calls
Of lonely fishers where I've slept
And waters crept
Along the barren banks of need.
I've piped the reed,
And broken love's sweet music low
I know.

To you who walk in shadows dark
And keenly hark
For kindly words if but to live,
Myself I give,
My life and all my heart and hand
Here where I stand.
'Tis thus that both our lives will grow
I know.

I bring but this one common thought
My life has wrought;
That from the dregs of drear despair
Still everywhere
There is a joy I yet may sip—
'Tis comradship
With all mankind, the high and low
I know.

HOME AGAIN.

I'm home again and the room is still,
Save faintly hums the low-turned light,
An insect buzzes now and then,
And the rain is pattering in the night.

The noise of the crowd still rings in me,
The dust of the street is on my shoes,
My limbs still ache from the marches long;
But ills fly quick while silence woos.

A thousand darting visions rise,
As I sit in the humming light and muse
O'er the din and dust and heartless rush,
And myself in memories' wanderings lose.

But the room is still; and the insect's buzz,
And the soft, sweet hum of the low-turned light,
And the rock of my chair, and the pattering rain,
Will banish the noise of the world from the night.

KINDNESS.

Who lives
For kindness gives
A light to darkened lands;
And tho no image of him stands
In public place, he is a martyr
Amid piratic schemes of barter
And triumphs tho he die unwept;
His light may once have crept
Through hearts of stone
And shone.

O LONELY WORKERS!

Hide it as men will, even from themselves, behind the
efforts of every man is the vision of a woman;
It looms across the lonely way and on the background
of every evening's twilight,
When the day's work is done and the worker's heart
creeps to his lips and whispers for sweet
companionship in the silent hours.
O lonely workers of the world, wandering, plodding,
and ever wandering, may the kindly
peace of this midsummer night woo you also!

IN YOUTH'S WILD PRIDE.

A boy there was who prayed but to be great;
And all impatiently he burned his light
Into the deepest dark, till dark took flight;
And his one joy was fame to contemplate.
He thrilled with wildest dreams as he did wait,
And scorned the common lives of men held tight
Within the toils of need; and worshipped might
E'en though it clutched the poor with fangs of hate.
And had—Oh had his highborn plans been wrought,
With earth's great monarchs then he would have trod,
The world of beauty would his smile have sought,
And courted oft and counted sweet his nod!
But lo! grim fate his climbing heel had caught,
And set him down 'mid common men to plod.

WHERE GOD IS.

"God's in his world and all is well,"
Said the man who had stores of worldly things.
"There is no God and the world is hell,"
Said the man who had need of worldly things.
For life needs rest
Before it is blest
By the God that we say is good,
And the pain of toil
Will surely spoil
The faith that had understood
Our God to be naught but just.
So let's bring rest
To the wearied breast
And not let goodness rust,
For love's a thing
That God will bring,
And God is one who thrives the best
Not in pain from o'er toil where poverty dwells,
But where there's work's reward and rest—
That's the place where our God most often dwells.

YOU WITH THE STILL SOUL.

Maybe you have a still soul that goes murmurless
like the water in the deep of rivers;
And perchance you wander silent amid
the din of the world's grinding barter
like one journeying in strange lands.
You, too, with the still soul, have your mission, for
beneath the dashing, noisy waves must ever run the
silent waters that give the tide its course.

FORGET.

O let me keep
My grief locked in my breast!
For it can make no burden light;
And I would have my songs bring rest.
But if sometimes my eyes be wet,
And I have made you sad,
I pray forget.

IN THE HOSPITAL.

I make what modest haste I can
To fill my little place,
For now it seems the night shades fall
Around my withered face.

The nurse has been so kind today,
And all day long has fanned;
The doctor has looked oft at me—
I think I understand.

No one has come to me today,
No one has wandered here;
And as the world grows hard within
The world without grows dear.

Again I'm free, I walk with friends
Along the shady street:
The rattle of the busy town
Again is music sweet.

And as I wander in my brain
Beyond the sick room door,
The nurse complains, "You must lie still,
You must now write no more."

And so, good-bye to you at work
In shade and sunshine fair,
I'd give what worldly goods I have
To be with you out there.

O beautiful world of green and gold,
Of bloom and blossom gay,
Of laughter, health and perfect sleep,
O take me back some day!

O take me back! I still am young,
And still would know the sweet
Of lover's whisper in the dawn,
When lips on lips shall meet.

I still would hear a woman's voice
By quiet evening light,
And plans repeated o'er and o'er,
And last a sweet good-night.

Again the nurse commands me now,
And I resign to fate,
While evening shadows softly fall,
And I lie still and wait.

SHIPS RETURNING HOME.

We are all ships returning home laden
with life's experience, memories of work,
good times and sorrows, each with his
especial cargo;
And it is our common lot to show the marks
of the voyage, here a shattered prow,
there a patched rigging, and every hulk
turned black by the unceasing batter of
the restless wave.
May we be thankful for fair weather and
smooth seas, and in times of storm
have the courage and patience
that mark every good mariner;
And, over all, may we have the cheering hope
of joyful meetings as our ship
at last drops anchor in the still
water of the eternal harbor.

TWO WOMEN.

Two women passed: the one had children many,
A babe within her arms then cried,
The other woman hadn't any;
Yet both these women looked and sighed.

WE SIT AND JUDGE.

We sit and judge without delay
On how each one betakes his way,
And laugh at every narrow man
Who can't enjoy the things we can,
And deep in hades souls we plant
That can enjoy the things we can't.

THE LIGHT OF A CHEERFUL HEART.

I tell you that you and I and the commonest
person are all journeying the same way,
hemmed in by the same narrow path,
leading to the eternal years.
We pride ourselves over our particular superiority;
but really there is little difference
between us;
And in this journey over the thousand hills and
valleys called life, he is wisest who is
patient where the way is hard, has faith when
he does not understand, and carries into the
dark places the light of a cheerful heart.

TO-MORROW.

How oft you've said to-morrow
Is time enough to speak a gentle word
To one whose olden friendship time had blurred
And set to naught sweet trysts of other years,
When life and love and faith were pledged with tears
That flowed as others' griefs you heard—
To-morrow you intend to speak the word.

'Mid discontent, to-morrow
Is then the golden day when you have thought
To build the temple which in dreams you'd wrought
So beautiful that agéd men did say
With pride they knew you in their childhood's day.
Though old ambitions come to naught,
To-morrow is the golden time you've thought.

When worn with care, to-morrow
You'll change your course for one which steals away
To quiet lands where cooling shadows stray
And sunbeams tremble on the placid green,

Far off 'mid some forgotten olden scene;
And there as once you'll rest and play.
To-morrow you are going far away.

'Mid childhood scenes, to-morrow
With long embrace your heart will melt like snow,
Close by the Mother's heart whose love you know.
Those lips from which the rose is gone will press
Your joyous tearful cheek with mild caress.
Again you'll hear the cattle's low.
To-morrow you will kiss the brow of snow.

Art lonely? Then to-morrow
You'll freely yield your aching heart the time
To weave some love romance of purest rhyme.
With throbbing heart at fall of silent night
You'll speed to one who waits by evening light,
Where fancy love's sweet corals chime.
To-morrow you will yield your heart the time.

When age has come, to-morrow
You'll speak with God to leave some kindly deeds
Writ by your name that softened selfish creeds
Of man's slow moving love of brotherhood,

That brought new hope to them who near you stood
In life's dark streets or sunlit meads.
To-morrow you'll ask God for better deeds.

To-morrow, O to-morrow!
Fast fall the fading years. A thought, a dream
Of gentle words; of faith and love a theme;
A smile, a step or two, and then 'tis done.
Quick is the veering stream of life full run;
Yet in the crimson west still gleam
To-morrow and to-morrow's endless dream.

OFT IN CROWDED MART.

To many strains I've touched my lute,
But not as worthy as I should,
For life and time still oft refute
The things for which I once have stood.

Though changed as seem my songs from youth,
A voice within my heart still sings,
"Live thou in tenderness and truth
And love mankind instead of things."

And often in the crowded mart,
'Mid rangling, selfish slaves of men,
This little humming song will start,
And bring me to myself again.

DO YOU REMEMBER ONCE UPON A NIGHT—

To J. A. W.

Do you remember once upon a night—
'Twas in the time of coming winter's frost;
And wildly fierce and cold the sharp winds tossed,
And whistled madly in the moon's chill light—
Do you remember when you caught a sight
Of me and I had wandered far and lost
My way, all faint of heart, and was much crossed
In life's dear plans that I had sought with might?
You said kind words and took my weakened hand,
And all your gentleness was life to me
Who had been lost in night's all stormy sea.
And then again I hoped and worked and planned
By your dear help my tangled feet to free.
I've not forgot your love—you understand?

WHO LOVES MANKIND.

Who truly loves mankind,
Though struggling he shall find
His humble, daily bread,
His soul is like the sun
'Mid myriads who have none
And, walking, still are dead.

I KNEW A DAUGHTER.

I knew a daughter,
A little babe,
The last of many others,
Of sisters and of brothers,
A queen of bliss
And many a kiss,
This dainty little miss.

I knew a daughter,
A glowing girl,
Who rose upon the drudging
The rest did unbegrudging
And toiled away
That they might say
She's "noble born" some day.

I knew a daughter,
A woman fair,
Who lived for naught but pleasure
And idled without measure,
Who quite forgot
The toiling lot
Of them that rested not.

TO THEM THAT CARRY THE LIGHT.

You swerve
Not from truth's way,
But hold with iron nerve,
And God I say
You serve.

Forsooth
All things built on
A lie will be uncouth
And cry ere gone
For truth.

Today
The world is quick;
You call, with brief delay
'Twill pierce the thick
You say.

Though night
And age come on,
Ere men perceive the light,
And you are gone
From sight,

Still you—
If you hold fast
Through persecution's rue—
Shall have at last
Your due.

Meanwhile
The work you find,
Let it the years beguile,
Grows sweetly kind
And smile.

Nor cease
At all in this;
For you it is the least
That truth is bliss
And peace.

GIVE ME TODAY.

Poets I've read until I'm weary—
Weary of meter, rhyme and lay—
Weary of far-off airy dreams,
Give me some life today.

I've read of languid eyes and tresses
That shone in the warming sun of May
Beside a lover well content.
Give me some love today.

I've followed lines that told of pageants,
Of lordly castles far away,
Of women fair in gorgeous dress.
Give me some wealth today.

I've seen in rhyme the feet of leisure
Of men and maids who never stray
From placid halls to wrangling mart.
Give me some rest today.

Just for a day I am beseeching
A day of love's sweet tender touch,
Some worldly goods, and what e'er comes!
Pray, do I ask too much?

AT THE OPERA.

"'Tis grand," I cried, as the song went on
With music sweetly wild.
My friend replied, "You ne'er have heard
The prattle of your child."

I LOOK OVER THIS WILDERNESS.

I look over this wilderness of monstrous
buildings and this race of hurrying,
careworn, nervous men, whose feet
never touched the cool, budding earth,
and whose souls lie dormant or dead
in their fevered bodies; and I ask,
"O God! is this civilization?"

Better the plain-clad follower of the plow,
who is no man's chattel, and toils
in God's pure air, the witness of
incessant birth of bud and bloom,
and of the sky by day and by night—
lacking ornament—but calm and free.

THE HATE AND THE LOVE OF THE WORLD.

I have seen men binding their brothers in chains,
and crafty traders reaching for the bread
that women and babes lifted to their mouths;
I have seen merciless greed extracting yet the last
pittance from the defenseless and weak;
I have seen suffering go unaided, and known the
stinging malice of them I loved;
I have heard the iron din of war, and have seen
the waxen face of early death;
And I have cried in my heart, THE WORLD IS HATE!

I have heard birds calling their mates in the
still forests, and insects chirping to
their loves in the tangled grass of meadows;
I have seen mothers caressing their babes, and
agéd men supporting with devotion the
slow steps of stooping women;
I have seen cheerful hearthstones surrounded by
laughing children and strong men and sweet women;
I have heard the tender words of lovers in the pure
passion of youth;
And I have cried in my heart, THE WORLD IS LOVE!

I SIT AFRAID.

O world, how I have loved you!
And you have stripped me and scourged me;
Yet have I loved you,
And my heart has been full of you.
I hear you say, "Who are you
That we should care for your love?"
I answer, "I am nothing,
But I loved you."
And I answer again, "I am nothing,
But I have reached my hand to the lowest,
And I have sat with want
That the weak might be nourished,
And the lonely filled with love."
Each one of you would I have folded in my arms,
Not in the public place in view of eyes,
But on the unseen path of every day,
For my heart was full of you,
My lips blooming with wild, sweet songs at morn,
And softer strains in evening's twilight hour.
But you stripped me and scourged me.
Now silent I sit afraid.

THE OLD MAGNOLIA TREE.

A Tale of South Carolina.

"You want to see some one?" the lady said,
As an old, bent darkey lifted up his head
From out his hands; and rising from the door,
Came slowly toward her, for she said no more,
And stopped inside the gate to know his will.
The spacious lawn and house within were still;
For empty was the place, some weeks had passed,
Or maybe months and weeks, since tenants last
Had trod the rooms that now lay grim and bare.
Upon the lawn were trees, palmetto, pear,
And evergreen, and near the fence there stood
An old magnolia tree of scented wood;
Long years the burning Carolina sun
Had met its leaves where boys now men had run.
Deep cracked and old, four mighty pillars sent
Their tops to meet an archéd roof that bent
And leaned. And yet some recent art not mean
With color made the house look bright and clean.

"You want to see some one?" the lady said,
The silvery-haired, old negro bowed his head,
And coming near with salutations dumb,
He finally replied, "Ah does, yes um."
And bowing on with many side steps slow
And questioning smiles and trembling voice still low:
"Is you de one dat's gwine to move into
Dis house da's made so fine, please, Miss, is you?
Ah's lived heah long 'fo' you was born, ah guess—
Please, Miss, de dog a-tryin' tear your dress.
Ah's only lived one place 'cept jes' right heah;
Mas' Hambleton fetched me from way down fah
Sabannah rivah—Hambleton—yes um.
Ah watch de chores an' does whatevah come."
The lady was the minister's good wife,
But lately come to guard the spiritual life
That parish held far down the Congaree,
In sunny Carolina, 'mid a sea
Of white-capped cotton fields now fresh o'errun,
Immaculate beneath the Southern sun.
He might stay, the lady said, and do the chores,
And mow the lawn, and mind the outer doors,
And water flowers, and trim the trees, with all
There'd be enough until each evening's fall.

And so he stayed, this darky old, and said
But little as the burning days turned red
In even's hour, and did his work all well
And kindly, with a mind that did not dwell
In hesitation on the longest task;
Nor for a single half-day's rest did ask,
As months went on in that hot Southern clime,
Until again 'twas cotton picking time.
And now the minister's good wife called him
As oft, while day at east was growing dim,
And said, "To-morrow rake the leaves to burn,
For now it is the cooler season's turn;
And I think, too, the old magnolia tree
You might cut down, and then you come to me;
And there next spring we'll make a flower bed."
He smiled and bowed, "Yes um, yes um," he said.
He raked the lawn and raked and raked yet more,
Until it looked like one vast velvet floor;
But swung no ax into that dying tree,
And sat beneath its limbs content and free
Till evening late, still humming some old song,
And thus a week and days soon slipped along.
The minister's good wife called him once more,
And standing in the mighty pillared door,
She said, "You haven't cut that tree down yet—
The old magnolia near the fence; don't let

Me see it there this time to-morrow eve;"
And with these earnest words she turned to leave.
"Please, Miss, de ole tree make a lot o' shade
When de sun all day a-shinin' hot an' rad."
"Oh—no, I think not much; fell it to-morrow."
"Yes um," he said, as if his heart knew sorrow.
To-morrows and to-morrows quickly came,
The old magnolia tree still stood the same.
Once it was an ax he lacked, and then
His back was feeble, and he asked again
A few days yet to do the task, and said,
As before, "Yes um," and humbly bowed his head.
And so the torrid Southern summer passed,
And solemn, cooler evenings came at last;
And now the good wife's o'ertaxed patience failed,
And once again the old negro she hailed,
And once again demanded—would he fell
The tree, or would he then and there dare tell
That this command he had no mind to heed,
"It's but an old o'ergrown and dying weed,
I'll have it cut; if you have not the will
Or strength for it, there are some others still.
I'll have it down—to-morrow—by this hour!"
With these sharp words his form began to cower,

And o'er his face now old with years of life
There spread the signs of grieving, inward strife.
"Well, well, and what reply have you?" she said;
The old black man raised up his silvery head,
And turned his kindly eyes upon her face,
Where shone the power of that other race.
"Don' talk like dat," and then he paused until
His timid heart was mastered by his will.
"Dem buds now turnin' white an' bloomin', Miss;
An' when de wind it touch 'em wid de kiss,
Day smell so sweet. Ah's seed 'em bloom up dah
Along 'fo' you was born or come down heah."
She tossed her head and with a woman's frown,
"To-morrow morn,I say, it shall be down!"
"No, Miss, ma good ole Misses she done plan'
Dat tree when de war was los', an' ah—ah can'
Cut it down. Young Mas' he nevah love young Misses
At furse, she jes' a-grievin' for his kisses.
Bofe pa'nts say day should marry an' day did,
Sometimes young Mas' to Cha'leston goes an' hid
Fu' days an' half de niggers starts to hunt,
An' den he talks to Miss so cross an' blunt
When he comes back, poor Miss she cry and cry,
An' den git sick till young Mas' 'fraid she die."

Impatient with his tale of times far gone,
The woman raised her hand, yet he went on.
"But when de baby Mary come, young Mas'
He change an' love young Miss and hole her fas'
In bofe his arms an' kiss her evah day,
An' kiss de lid'le baby too, an' say
He nevah, nevah know what babies for—
Dat—dat was 'fo' de war—'fo' de war.
An' ole Mas', too, an' good ole Misses bofe,
Day laugh an' cry wid joy fu' days, and loaf
'Round young Mas' house an' quarrel wid Ann, de nurse,
'Cause each one wan' to hole de baby furse;
An' jump around wid it an' laugh and dance—
Ole Mas' an' Misses dem—dem young Mas' pa'nts.
Den d'rectly say de war a-gwine come on,
Ole Mas' an' young Mas' bofe to Cha'leston gone,
A-sayin', 'You take kyar ma babe and Miss,'
An' ride away, an' from dat day to dis
Ah ain't seed him no mo', but ole Mas' he
Come back, a bullet hole shot fru his knee;
An mos' de heartless niggers run away
An' leave Miss an' de baby, but ah stay.
De lid'le baby Mary, she grow fas',
An' 'fo' we know free summers day done pass,

An' den one night de wind blow fierce and loud.
Day say de blue-coats heah, a mighty crowd,
Gen' Sherman's ahmy come from up de sea;
De cannons roar, de houses burn, and we—
We scared to deaf—de niggers, whites, an'all;
In fron' de house we hear de devils call,
A-sayin', 'Burn it down and dem inside!'
De barns a-smokin' whah de niggers hide,
De sky all rad wid flames like blood—de shrieks
De women folks a-makin' as de seeks
To hide—de white an' black, no dif'ence now!
De babe she lay on Miss's breast, her brow
A-burnin' wid de fevah. Now day come,
Like mad men drunk fu' human blood, an' some
A-wavin' torches run inside de gate,
Ah jumps clean fru de window, an' says, 'Wait!
Dah's a babe inside dat's sick an' nigh to deaf!'
Seem like dat crowd of blue-coats hole dah breaf,
Some come a-runnin' 'round whah ah was sayin'
It ovah—ovah 'g'in while dey was stayin'.
One shouts, 'We gwine set all you niggers free!'
Ah shouts, 'Ah is, you need'n stay fu' me!'
Den on ma head a knock—ag'in—once more,
Ah reels, a-stagg'rin, re'ch out fu' de do',

An' drap right down and hears ma massa say,
'Take kyar ma babe an' Miss,' an' ride away.
One beside de captain shouts, 'De house! de house!'
'Stan' back!' he say, an' day was still as a mouse.
An' as ah turn, dah in de torches' light,
Stan' Miss an' de babe, like angels dressed in white;
An' de sound of marchin' seem to die away,
An' da'kness come a-fallin' whah ah lay,
An' seem like summah time a-long ago,
An' winds a-blowin' fru de trees so low,
Like fa' off music from de crooked lane
Whah cabins stand along de fields of cane,
And whah de niggers dance an' sing an' sing
Till stars a-wavin' an' de valleys ring.
Ah soon wakes up, but de babe she gone to rest
Dat winter night, asleep on Miss's breast.
We bury her one morn, young Miss an' me,
Dah by de fence whah she could always see
De place her baby Mary sleep so still.
An' when de springtime come ah makes a hill
Besides de grabe; an' Miss, so po' an' white,
She drap a seed, den fol' her hands up tight,
An' raise her eyes to de evenin' sky an' pray,
To herself-like, den aloud an' slow she say,

'Lawd, bring fort' de tender leaf from out de ground,
An' let de years spread branches fa' around,
An' let de tree live on in place de dead.'
She drap her hands, an' dat was all she said.
De years day come, an' creepin' past day go,
An' from de seed dat same magnolia grow.
Young Miss she soon turn ole an' put away;
Ah only an' dat tree is heah to stay.
Sometimes it seem to talk; an' evah breeze
At night finds dis ole body on its knees,
An' dah de sound of whisp'rin' leaves above
Seem like de voices ole of dem ah love;
An' evah mornin' 'fo' you's up ah hears
De warbler sing so sweet it fetch de tears;
An' in de risin' sunlight of' ah see
Young Miss an' de babe sit dah beneaf dat tree,
An' thinks ah hear young Mas' a-callin' say,
'Take kyar ma babe and Miss!' and ride away."

AS I RETURNED TO THE DIM OF MY STUDY.

You pallid-faced person with the book under your arm, you with the eyes that look far away, and you with the eyes that look in, sitting nightly by your lamp—

You who daily browse in libraries and dusty bookshops—is it an explanation of the cosmic wheels you seek? I, too, with rapture have searched in libraries, touching this volume, scanning that, and pondering long o'er yet another.

Oh with what a throbbing heart have I implored the pages to yield their wisdom to me! No speech can explain the unworldly joy that was in me, while I pursued the thoughts of one the world had dubbed an immortal seer.

And at last, having mastered the thought, I cried to the great God in thanks for my joy. Had He not made me a confidant of His wisdom? Was I not also now a keeper of immortal truth?

How I have walked in the sunlight with an air of superior knowledge, questioning the advantage of farther study!

Poor fool!

The awakening—the terrible awakening to find that I had been dreaming day and night for months, to find that my

immortal seer was not the only immortal seer, that he was no seer at all, to find that another held the secrets of God whispered from on high!

The second cry of ecstasy was less joyous, the third still less, the fourth still less, until at last there was no more ecstasy, distrust pricking me like a thorn.

But now I know the greater wisdom; for pursuing one night the last pages of the last metaphysician who would teach me what he knew not himself, I heard a child crying in the dark,

And I sought out the child in the dark, and carried it on my shoulder to the love it had wandered from.

And on my return, I passed a house where there was laughter, and music, and dancing;

And farther on, under the light of a lamp, one called me by name, and took my hand, and pressed it in his own, and spoke kindly;

And as I returned to my metaphysician, in the dim of my study, I smiled; for I saw that the thing I sought was in me, and in the child, and in the dancers, and in him who took me by the hand.

On the Shores of the Sky

WHO ENTERETH HERE.

(For the Door of Your Dream House.)

Whoe'er thou art that entereth here,
  Forget the struggling world
And every trembling fear.

Take from thy heart each evil thought,
  And all that selfishness
Within thy life has wrought.

For once inside this place thou'lt find
  No barter, servant's fear,
Nor master's voice unkind.

Here all are kin of God above—
  Thou, too, dear heart; and here
The rule of life is love.

THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

Once I lived on a high mountain,
dead to the distant world of men,
dead to possession of any thing,
dead to myself of flesh.

The quiet sun attending me by day,
made of earth a dome of beaten gold,
I wandering always on the top,
and looking downward on the world.

By night the moon walked with me,
my brother of the sky,
saying things in a voiceless voice,
which I understood.

The stars knew me in the night and smiled,
children of the house of God
playing on the mead of heaven,
calling often to each other.

Not once saw I God face to face,
yet heard Him when I stopped my ears,
whispering as does the sea
on the bosom of the night.

I feared to close my eyes,
banishing the world,
and call Him to show His face,
lest I should die.

Yet always by day and night
I saw His children of the mead
looking down on me,
I looking downward on the world.

Speaking with no one,
human speech I nigh forgot—
the sighing seas of God
breathing in my breast.

All the music of forgotten worlds
echoed in my brain;
and the unborn children sang,
and the dead children sang.

But naught could I see
save the dome of beaten gold,
and the playing babes of the sky,
and the sun and the moon.

And none would come to touch me,
and take me by the human hand,
and press me tight in arms
that held the warmth of earth as I.

I saw naught but eternal things,
heard naught but eternal speech;
I alone was ephemeral
amid these timeless beings.

The purity of the mountain top
froze the crimson rivers of my flesh;
and since I was to die,
I longed for mortal kin.

The kindly human voice,
with the sin of the crowded world,
and duty, and toil, and laughter—
all called for me to come;

And rushing down from the mountain top,
I sought again the world of women and men,
the warm water of human things
touching me on every side.

In lane and mart I walked with men;
drank from the cup of love
till I was subdued with joy,
yielding childlike to the manner of the world.

Now the mountain top is far away;
but the love of dying things is mine,
for out of death our love is made;
and I am with my kin.

GOODNESS.

He sent his soul to live in deepest solitude,
That goodness he might learn and heaven win,
When lo! a soundless voice rang through his sleeping soul,
"There is no goodness where there is no sin,
And cowards they who shun in fear
The battle here."

PROGRESSIVE CONFESSIONAL.

ASCETICISM.

I have known earthly joys, and yet
In by-ways oft at night I've met,
As years have moved so swiftly on,
Some secret pain from out the past
That had its birth in pleasures gone
And made me beg God's grace at last.

SCEPTICISM.

And yet so many deeds called wrong
Have brought me joys in goodly throng;
And many deeds that men call good
Have plunged me in the deepest dark;
I doubt that e'er I understood
On which God puts his righteous mark.

POSITIVISM.

Now this one thing is clear to me;
That laws, howe'er proclaimed to be
From God, if they 'gainst nature go,
Are human made, and do confess
Man's ignorance. For this I know,
Our God has meant us happiness.

THE WALL.

LOVE.

We're up against the wall and can't climb o'er,
And can't break through;
So let us play and laugh and try no more,
Come, just we two.

LIFE.

We're up against the wall and can't climb o'er,
And can't break through;
So let us try on this same side the door
What we can do.

DEATH.

We're up against the wall and can't climb o'er,
And can't break through;
But now 'tis on the other side the door
Just facing you.

LETTER TO A SOLITARY.

How often have I unpacked my heart under
the stars, careless of the swift night hours,
and scornful of the days and years as they
passed the horizon of the present!
Why did I not disembosom myself to one
who could understand, instead of carrying
the conventional face in the sunlight of many days?
I lacked courage, faith; and so was kept
from my own by cloistering the inner songs
save from the dead ears of the silent night.
The fingers of the gods I found cold, lacking the warmth
of human hands, and the voice of the stars
in the night—though unforgettable—
was still incomplete without the music
of human whispers.
In meditation I trod the snow-stained mountains,
where the air is chill, unwarmed by human
breath; and though my vision widened, the
sweet noises of the peopled valley died
away, and the songs of love withered on
my lips.

I do not counsel you, O solitary! to shun
eternally the mountain, and the purer air,
and the broader vision, and the prayers
by the star-tapers of the night, and the foot-
steps of God echoing on the mosaic of
the inner cathedral.
I do not counsel you to blind the spirit-eyes,
impatient to look from the spires of
immortality, or to be ignorant of the
inarticulate language of the golden
worlds that nightly sweep the brooding dome,
or never to bathe yourself in the strange
solitude of the moon.
I do not counsel you to quench the beacon
on the hilltop of your timeless self,
or to stop your ears to strains of
immortal music. These—all these the
sweet people of the valley need, still
prostrate in the church of things.
Therefore, O solitary! bring now and then from
the mountain your vision, your music, and your light.
Set your lamp in the darkened places, and
sing in the crowded world the whispered
melodies of your better self; re-echo with

your own feet the steps of God heard in the
inner cathedral, breathe the breath of
purer air, and paint on the curtain of
daily life your visions of the timeless hour.
Though some understand you not, others will
kiss your lips to smiles, and sit with you
in the luminous hour, and you shall feel the
warmth of strong hands, and the light that
is within you shall be as a wedding house.
And you, O solitary, shall touch your kin
with the naked hand, and blend with
the music of the world your spirit
songs, and walk attended in the quiet
evening over the paths warmed by human
steps, knowing the pressure of a
woman's hand at dawn—you! Godlike
yet human still.

I SIT AND WAIT.

I sit and wait upon my soul tonight,
And watch the changing sky,
The clouds and stars that fly
Within the silent moon's far-reaching light
That glorifies the night.

Now would some keen, hard-headed son of trade
Laugh loud at me, and say,
"Your soul is gone? which way?
And tell me of what stuff a soul is made.
The thing's no good in trade."

And proud philosophers would hard contend
To tell me all they knew
Of souls in me and you;
Forgetting where the lights of heaven blend
And shine, while they contend.

So each one to his wish, and as for me,
I sit tonight and wait
In slumb'rous moonlight late,

To feel the freedom of the world in me
Like waves of a shoreless sea.

Wee foot of earth, I journey with the dead
That smile in bliss afar
On yonder liquid star,
And on and on to ruby worlds of red
From earthly vision fled;

Where lonely faces I have known on earth
Now smile in endless bliss,
And fling to me the kiss
Of love, 'mid twilight music soft with mirth
Remembered long ere birth.

And evening gardens built of pleasant thought,
Where tripping laughters greet
The timid bridal feet
Of them new-wed to bliss; and sleep is naught
But love subdued and caught.

Oh, wake me not! but let me still beguile
Myself in this sweet sleep,
As through the world I creep
On nameless wings, and rest myself, and smile—
Let me be dead awhile.

THOU MOTHER.

Again thou whispereth through the years to me,
I feel the pressure of thy lips at eve;
Again thy kindly moistened eyes I see,
And hear sweet counsel that I should not grieve,
Thy gentle arms around me tight as we,
Rock slow, and I thy sweet caress receive;
Yet oft I see thy face with sorrow wrung,
Until sometime in fright I scarce believe
That I still dream. The tales when thou wast young,
Thine own sweet hopes, thy lips, and laughter free,
In some weird way are strangely haunting me.

Thou mother of my childhood's pleasant days,
Still whispering hope and courage through the years,
In stilly cooling eve and daylight's rays,
Art thou naught but a vision bringing cheers?
Or dost thou walk with me along the ways,
And know my inmost joys and my dread fears
That pass when thou art near and far-off seem?

O wake me up, thou God, if I but dream!

AFIELD.

Drunk with dreams and songs and love
I wander afield.
Meditations, softened by the peaceful lands
of growing grain and the illimitable
sea of blue o'erhead in which float
the placid ships of summer, draw
my heart to my lips as one whose
talent is in song.
I yield to the thousand felicities of this
transport, as a child led by his
father's hand, and I question not.

O DREAM OF LOVE!

Lost in olden dreams and gleeful songs,
I tread again the garden paths of youth.
The joys of myriad hopes in twilight's hour,
And visions in the shadowed starry night,
Lift up my heart unto my parted lips,
Like one whose talent is in song. And as
The kindly earth yields forth each spring
Her budding brood, so in my barren heart
There blooms again the rose of sweet content.
O'er worldly din and godless strife of men
Arise the symphonies of endless peace;
Resurrected is the human heart
From out the grave of withered selfishness,
And touched to song the moistened lips of love.
They awake that slumbered in their gold,
With tender arms enfolding them that want.
Tired men that tread the crowded streets
Find a place of sweet repose at night,
And fill with love the hearts of lonely women.
From myriad mother arms come forth sweet babes,

Like budding roses dewy fresh at dawn,
To light with joy the byways of the earth.—
O dream of love! endure through speeding years
That I shall pass in worldly din and dust,
A shining light to cheer my wand'ring steps,
As long ago in sunlit paths of youth.

MY NATIVE CITY.

I.

A long walk. Tired and contented. I have been dreaming again.

My walk led me upon a hill to the southeast.

When at the top, I turned to see some cattle grazing on the wayside—and behold! my native city lay at my feet.

How silent, how small, how secluded! Like a new toy in the grass, or a nest tucked away among the trees of the surrounding valley; or—save for the lines of smoke moving slowly to the north— like a picture hanging in a gallery.

No one was near me, and only a few farmhouses in the distance.

And I thought and dreamed of the wanderings of men amid the toy-town in the grass,

Of the desires and hopes that had come and passed in this nest among the trees.

I thought of my own wanderings, and remembered some sleepless hours divine with the music of the night.

A thousand memories filled me with the joys of other years—memories of friends changed and gone, and of the

dawning sun lighting up the nimble fancy worlds of youth.

I thought I could see the place where two lovers met in the dim past, and out of the kiss of their lips I crawled into the morning of the world—and these poems after me.

Though I did not hear their words, unforgotten is their lover's parley; for ere they knew me, it was I who moved their lips to speech in the still night.

How much history has passed within this small space of earth! of no importance to the world; yet all important the life of each to himself.

How many have lived and toiled and planned here— how many, tired and care-worn, have lain down here to repose at night!

How many places where elegance and beauty once reigned have fallen to base uses! and how many, merry with midnight music and the dance, have been lifted into immortal joy, as if death were not!

II.

O my native city! thou knowest not how often I have thought of thee when far away.

When I have wandered amid other scenes, and other men and

women and children have passed by me, fondly have I thought of thee.

The cool shade of thy many trees, and the memory of the gentle river at thy margin, have been a solace to me in strange and distant places.

But thou wilt go on unconcerned as ever when I am gone into the silent land.

Soon wilt thou forget that such a worm as I crawled about thy streets in the shadow of thy buildings.

Within thy bosom I lay as a child, have grown to manhood, and shall at last rest in dreamless sleep.

But thou, too, must pass away; and where now is trade and manufacture God in his time will plant another forest;

And it will grow, and no man will know that thou dwelt there.

On new-born branches birds will whisper songs of love, and flowered children of the wilderness will drink the sun wine, and gloaming eve shall know the wild dove's voice, and this race of hurrying, contentious men shall lie—O so still under the grass!

So, too, all things shall pass away—I, thou, country, earth, solar systems.

What remains?—God!

SCORN NOT THE INNER SONG.

What dreams of golden lights are these
That steal upon the placid leas
And through your heart
Where passions dart
At day?

What mystic murmurs these you hear
That come and ever more come near
In softest gloom
Of twilight's bloom
At eve?

Are these a premonition rare
Of what the other life so fair
Shall be at last
When this is past
And gone?

Scorn not, therefore, the inner song
The soul sings for itself along
The hastening years
Of many tears
At eve.

Nor scorn the limpid whispers high
That steal across the evening sky
And part your soul
From all the dole
Of day.

AN ARTIST'S PRAYER.

Lord God, thou who dost paint with magic touch
The curtains of the soft and silent night,
This gift I ask, that o'er whatever cloth
My brush may glide, now to and fro and 'round,
There will come that which ever pleases thee.
Help me to make the things that beauty hold
Amid these veering lines and diverse shades,
That cheer will bring to sad and solemn men
And tired women in their dreary haunts,
That youth will not forget on highways hard
With troubled years, when somber night is on,
And when no kindly light leads through the way,
That joy and love may dawn like newborn days
In hearts where long the chambers have been dark.
Let lowly life and dusty daily toil
Come near me evermore and day by day,
That I forget not them that still are kind
Though tried by years of unrequited toil,
Alas! and sometimes want and age and pain.
Let me not love my pictures more than men,

Nor follow the wild lead of some mad dream,
Nor see myself as if above the crowd
Commanding that they all shall bow their heads;
Instead, with kindly heart and gentle hand
And smiles upon my face, let me serve them
Whose muscles ache at evening's twilight fall
While mine in comfort still are fresh and strong.
May all these be not empty, idle words,
But all the burden of my life's sweet task.
And when thou seest that my work is done,
Let me feel thy soft evening shadows fall
As when I climbed into my nursery bed
With childish faith in time's old long ago;
And let the kiss of peace lie on my lips.

AT NIGHTFALL.

Though I know I shall sometime no more
open my eyes to the night or the day,
I am one who looks at the stars when
unchained from the work-bench at
nightfall.
They are a sign that I am not ephemeral,
nor you, nor you, whoever you are.
The dawn comes and the dark and the sign
sparkling in the brooding night,
forever and forever.

BY THE WABASH'S LISPING FLOW.

By the Wabash's lisping flow
When the day was sinking low,
Oft I've sat in silence long
Listening to the river's song,
Gurgling, gushing all night through
Till the time of morning's dew,
Till the golden shafts of sun
Glistened where the waters run,
Dashing, splashing ever on
Making music to the dawn;
Singing with a voice that said,
"This wild life for years I've led.
Come with me along the lands
To the ocean's widened sands;
There to revel in the deep
In a blissful boisterous sleep."
Mutt'ring, mutt'ring ever so
Till my heart was filled with woe.
"Come and in a tempest's roar
We will wash old England's shore,
O'er the Thames we'll gently glide,
By old London town we'll stride,

Through the Norman's magic land,
Taking rivers by the hand,
Then we'll ride before the lee
Into Greek's Ionian sea,
'Long the lands of China old
To the creeping northern cold.
O'er the earth we'll wander free
Into rivers, lakes, and sea,
Singing, laughing, night and day,
Nowhere, nowhere shall we stay;
And in long, long years maybe
We shall come again to see
These old shores so still and dead."
This the singing waters said
In a mutt'ring, mutt'ring song
Through the silent hours long,
As I sat with heart beguiled
Like some wistful little child,
Dreaming, beaming all aglow
By the Wabash's lisping flow.

THE HALF-DREAM.

At the breaking of twilight on a spring morning,
half waking and half asleep, in that
mysterious humor between death and
life, when the faculties lack will and
the imagination is free, I fancied I
lay by an open window on the slope
of a mountain;

Through the dim gray light the shafts of the
sun rose from a hill before me; and
I thought a sea lay beyond that, and
I could hear the murmuring waters;

Besides this there was no sound save an angelus
tolling as if far away;

The herds on the mountain lay still, and the
last stars trembled faintly in the
lighting sky.

Presently to the voice of the sea was added the
sound of early matins issuing from
children's lips in cloistered walls,
and then one clear voice—a woman's;

Then silence and the murmuring, murmuring
waters of the sea.

When I came to myself I could not account for
this vision, unless it was something
I had seen or dreamed long ago of
happiness and peace on earth—

Something that had been forgotten, and now, by
the machinery of my own mind, arose
from out the oblivious and dust-
beladen past.

I GIVE MYSELF FOR LOVE.

O you who love me, do you wish to bind
But me, that losing love
Yet no escape I find?

My heart I cannot barter for all days,
Though swearing with my tongue
A thousand, thousand ways.

The house of love is spirit, and no key
Will firmly close its doors
Forever and for thee.

Yet if you love but me, the one true way,
Without agreements long,
I'll go with you today.

But if by spring or noon or summer you
Look sad upon my face,
We'll smile and say adieu.

Glad, glad that we have tasted to the core
The sweet of all the world,
Though we shall taste no more.

L. OF C.

For this I give my all—below, above,
On earth, and after it—
I give myself for love.

REVELATION.

I.

Once, after long weeks in the dust and heat of the city—
in the noisy strife of the crowded world—
covered daily with the grime of toil—
Once, I say, I stood in the still night upon the shore
of a lake; and for a long time I watched the lurid west.
And with my own eyes I saw God painting upon the sky-curtain
of the softening dark;
And, after a while, the moon and her brood of stars wandered
through the night;
And I said to myself I need no bibles of old revelation;
this is revelation; out of this beauty is my faith born.

II.

Now that night is passed, and I again hear the noise
and feel the grime of the crowded world;
But now I am more patient and longer suffering, for I know that
nightly God is painting His revelation on the sky-
curtain over the lake where I stood.
And over every lake, and over the crest of every hill, and over
the green level of every open field, and if we could
but see, over the sky-obscuring houses of every city—
is God painting His revelation.

AN EASTER PRAYER.

Resurrect Thou the dreams and songs and love that enchanted the garden of my youth, filled with the joys of a thousand hopes in the still morning's twilight, and dawning visions in the shadowed, starry night. As the kindly earth yields forth each spring her budding brood, so in the barren winter of my heart may there bloom again the rose of sweet content.

O'er the din of the world and the strife of men, let rise the symphonies of eternal peace. Resurrect them that slumber in graves of gold; and deliver humanity from those cruel conventions that are but the husks of virtue. Make kindness king, and teach us that good deeds are greater than philosophy. To tired men that daily tread the crowded streets, give Thou a place of sweet repose at night; and fill with love the hearts of lonely women. Bring forth sweet babes from out the arms of each, to light with joy the byways of the earth.

Thou Great God, uphold me also in the lonely hour; and though I fall in the din and the dust of the world, resurrect Thou me. Even to the last, turn my

hands to kindly service, and part my lips in gleeful songs of love. And in the softly falling dark, when all grows strangely still, may I be glad to have trod the sweet green earth, and know the tender touch of love. Yet may I depart with joy, as one who journeys home at evening.

MY KIN.

If I have called to mind one long laid low;
(Thy better self) thou art my kin;
I am not he, although
I know him, too, within.

WHO SLEEPETH HERE.

Who sleepeth here within this bed
He will be dead,
While through the night the darkness creeps
Round where he sleeps
So silently, but wakes him not,
Nor moves a jot
Of all that hangs and stands around,
Nor makes a sound;
But creeps and creeps and blacker grows,
Until who knows
But spirits dance upon the sheet
With nimble feet!
Perhaps his own soul goes about
Within the rout,
Perhaps his own soul wags its toes—
I say, who knows!
And dances hard and laughs and smiles
Through many miles
Within the darkened, darkened room
Of deepest gloom.
And when the revelry is done,
Before the sun

Begins to peep above the hill,
On tip-toes still
His own soul then will crawl in bed
Beside the dead,
And pull his ears and pull his nose
Until the doze
Is broken quite—then quick as can
It's in the man;
And all is o'er and all is done—
The night is run.
And now you laugh at this strange thought
And say 'tis naught
But nonsense from a mad heart's throes—
But yet who knows!

CROESUS'S DREAM.

He lay that night in fitful sleep,
For schemes of gold that day were deep,
And plans for sordid gain
Yet tossed within his brain.

He dreamed his gardens grand he trod
Till morn. An angel fair from God
He saw nearby the gate
He asked to be his mate.

He told of all who lived by toil
In houses his, on bounteous soil,
And that in trade he led;
And asking then he said:

"I've gained so much of earth, shall I
Not merit heaven when I die?"
"Not so," the angel quoth,
"No man can merit both."

THE VOICE.

I sought to write a lofty theme,
Some sweet and righteous poet's dream;
When quick there came from out my heart
A ghastly voice that made me start:
"Such work is for the just," it said,
"Almost thy heart and soul are dead;
If thou would'st lead men to the light,
First bring thyself from out the night."

A TOAST TO SOMBRE STUDENTS.

This world a riddle hard you call—
A mess from which you fain would shrink?
Perhaps 'tis wisdom, all in all,
To learn to laugh as well as think.

Let wildly unrepressed the jest
Rush past the luscious lip,
'Twill bring a round of goodly sound
And make our laughter trip.

And let the spirit light take flight
From out the sombre sea,
To memories, gleams, and glad wild dreams
In hearts of you and me.

And let the stories come and some
Of love and suitors bold;
So long they last that much is past
Of life in fashions old.

A sombre student I should die,
If lost in theory's sea;
For life holds cheers as well as tears.
Take this old toast from me:

This world a riddle hard you call—
A mess from which you fain would shrink?
Perhaps 'tis wisdom, all in all,
To learn to laugh as well as think.

WILL YOU COME BACK?

Will you come back to me,
My friend,
Where day's sweet silent shafts still blend
Night's sea—
Will you come back to me?

I think of you in silent hours,
You know
The dawn and dark drag on how slow
'Neath bowers
Alone in evening hours.

I need you more with all the years
That come,
Each bringing its fast growing sum
Of fears.
I need you more with years.

Some place you've gone, I know not where.
I bend
My head each stilly night and send
A prayer
To "lands I know not where."

And should you hear my voice at last,
Come quick,
Soon will the night be falling thick,
And past
Will be my voice at last.

And once again we'll live in dreams
Of youth,
When all was joy and hope and truth.
It seems you're here amid my dreams.

Will you in truth then come to me,
My friend,
Where day's sweet silent shafts still blend
Night's sea—
Will you come back to me?

TELL ME.

Come tell me, you who verses write—
Do you with might
Betray your inmost thought?
And you who paint these pictures grand—
Do they all stand
For what your heart has wrought?
And you who cut the marble cold—
Does it now hold
The things your life has taught?
And you, O you, who sweetly sing!
Do your words bring
The bliss your soul has caught?

IN THE NIGHT'S MYSTERIOUS STILLNESS.

Have you ever walked out in the still, still night,
and sat where you could see the lights
dying one by one in the distant city—

Sat until the stars sang to rest the weariness of the
world in you—until you lost yourself
in dreams on the soft bosom of the night,

And felt again the peace of early youth welling
up in you like a fountain of sweet waters—
until like a child in the father's arms,
you felt unafraid,

And withered memories bloomed again in that
innner garden, and little things were
forgot in the vast stillness of the
glorious growing night,

And the same old ships of gold that sailed o'er
the Pharaohs sailed o'er you in the
same old sea of dark,

And epochs and wars and the myriad passions
and loves of the myriad years faded in
the infinite peace of the still, still night?

IF THE NOISE OF THE CITY.

If the noise of the city offend you, go afield,
when you may, with the birds and the
wild free life that troubles not;
The growing grain and the placid sky have a kind
of voice; and though you are alone, the
boundlessness of the universe is with you.

The dream of imperishable passions in old history,
the love of mothers for children, and the love
of children, born and unborn, and all love,
swarm in the soft air, speaking to the
inner ear in the still language.

Go afield with the birds and the growing grain
and the placid sky, and dream and forget;
and you will see that you are changed when
you awake and the gleams of the city peep
in your twilight returning.

PRIVATE INTERPRETATIONS.

He said, "I saw you very late last night;
Some business, sir, that made it right
For you to walk the dark so dread
And wild?"—
"An engagement with the stars," I said—
He smiled.

"And once on Clinton Road at early morn
I saw you out when most men scorn
To rise. Had you seen some one fair?"
He chaffed.—
"Oh, yes! I met the sunrise there."—
He laughed.

HOPE.

Deny me all the good of earth—
All joy and soul-rebounding mirth,
All wealth and rank and love's great days;
But leave one thing by which to cope
With ebbing life's dim evening rays—
Leave me but hope.

THE POET AND THE PIRATE.

A Query.

I.

He sang a song once in his youth,
A song from out his heart,
A peal of tender truth,
Of simple life and honest deeds,
Of love and faith in God;
As sweet as though through reeds
The summer wind itself had sung,
And played upon the harp
That nimble nature strung.
But soon forgot, in stress of years,
And tasks and wearied flesh
And silent inner tears—
Forgot the warming tenderness
Of boyish dreams, yet knew
That each year's light grew less.
Until the youth that sang the song
Had passed, but he still moved
Among the changing throng;
And lived as one born hard and gray,
Who'd never dreamed, and quite

Forgot his boyish lay,
And daily plied a crafty trade,
Until his coffers full
Aside he'd smiling laid;
And they that crossed his path at mart
Accursed his cunning hand
And grinding, selfish heart.

II.

The tender song of truth lived, too,
And crept its silent way
To many a heart of rue,
To hamlets where of wearied toil
Men rest in stilly eve
From turning o'er the soil.
In cities many a weakened heart
Took faith and strength again
Life's restless work to start.
And children built upon its cheer,
And gray and agéd men
It spared from coming fear—
Now this the query that I bring,
When life is done, how will
God straighten out this thing

Of youthful singer and his cause—
Of pirate at the mart?
But one in flesh there was,
Yet surely two in point of heart.
If one and he condemned,
What of the gentler part?—
O dreamy, youthful singer, gone
The way the world of years,
In that last rising dawn,
I'll listen for thy voice again,
As oft I heard it low
And sweet—I'll listen then!

DREAM-WORK.

'Tis great to dream
  Though one should be a shirker,
But greater far
  To dream and be a worker.

O SWEET CONTENT.

O sweet content! where is thy mild abode
Where I may dwell in endless peace?
Show me the much sought road
And give the lease.

The answer came, "Then cease to vainly roam
In search of me, for thou wilt find
My quiet hidden home
Within thy mind."

THE DREAMER AND THE DEAD.

The dreamer to the flesh must yield,
Else life's a passing eddy;
But he who lives in flesh alone,
Why—he's quite dead already.

I SIT AND SMILE AT MYSELF.

I.

I sit and smile at myself,
As deep into the dark I dream and write.
What boots it to me that I should waste my youth
And burn the oil of night?
For I'll but live my little day,
And then away.

I sit and smile at myself,
As dreaming half the sweet of life I miss,
And beat my soul against the deadened wall
Of fate, and lose the kiss
Of love and laughter light,
As here I write.

I sit and smile at myself,
And yet as I dip oar in life's swift sea,
I somehow feel that I, poor fool, still do
The work that's meant for me.
So on and on and on I write
Into the night.

II.

Sing on, O singers all!
(A voice calls out) sweet dreamers, dream yet on
And chant and chant upon the beach of night,
Until the graying dawn
Finds flags of brotherhood unfurled
Across the world.

For life's a battle hard
And singers still must come from out the throng
To soften them who in the hot pursuit
Will listen to a song.
So spin thy lays in ringing rhyme
At midnight time.

This be excuse enough,
Thou scribbling, ever scratching, jingling seer,
And in the final counting of the world,
When each man's page is clear,
And all is o'er with earth's wild pace,
Thou'lt have thy place.

MY YOUTH AND I.

I said good-bye to him,
My youth, myself.
I said good-bye, the time
Had come in truth.

His hand was soft in mine,
His cheeks were red,
His lips like those of girls'
I've heard it said.

No petty falsehood did
His eyes bedim;
And women freely went
Their ways with him.

He said not always could
He stay with me;
And so we parted, I,
My youth and he.

One thing he left behind,
His image here,
Drawn in memory's hall
That with the past grows dear.

Dreaming now in twilight,
The picture dim
I see again, again
I walk with him.

Again we dream and drink
Of love's sweet wine;
The lips of olden days
Are pressed on mine.

And gleaming golden worlds
Of mystic light
Float o'er our heads upon
The sea of night.

And whispered music lisps
From trembling leaf
Some old forgotten songs
Of love and grief.

And if I go at last
Where all is fair,
I pray my youth again
Will meet me there.

And when my aged eyes
Are no more dim,
I'll take his hand and say,
"Hello" to him.

AS I LOOK INTO YOUR FACE, O NIGHT!

I.

As I look into your face, O night!
I feel the magic tissue of the dark
That coolly presses on my fevered face and breast;
I see the beckoning stars, pledges of my early God,
The changing lines of distant hills,
The glistening water in the moon's still light,
The shadows of passing lovers, arm in arm,
Dreaming in this moment's fleeting bliss,
The old man musing of times forgot and dead,
The maiden patiently waiting for the familiar step,
The well-mated husband seeking rest at home,
The young mother singing tender love songs,
The darkened woods with magic memories filled,
The dusty road with the myriad noises of the strange dark,
The gleams of lonely houses,
And the lurid gleams of distant cities—
As I look into your face, O night!

II.

As I look into your face, O night!
I see the temples of my early dreams,

The music of evening winds lisps in the dark,
The music of my life goes o'er the world,
I am the world, and one with the infinite God,
And there is in this hour no mine and thine,
The stars speak, the stillness, too, has language—
I understand; eternity broods upon the world.
I see my calm face, ruddy and fresh with youth;
Anguish and bliss alike sleep as with the dead,
Dumb lie the martyrs beside the babes in oblivion,
Speechless the tongues that commanded the world;
Kings, nations, history, fade
With the crimson blood of wars past.
All is still, peaceful, eternal,
And strange things arise out of the sea of dark—
As I look into your face, O night!

SLEEP SWEETLY.

Sleep sweetly now that the gates of the
crimson night are closed, and leave
to-morrow's struggle for to-morrow;
The earth is peaceful, only the stars and still moon
are abroad, and they wage no war.

SOMETHING WILL RISE IN YOU.

Occasionally permit self-abandonment to the caprice
of beauty; rush past the sentinel that
keeps you in the prisoned city, and
live for an hour in the house of the
world, acquainting yourself with the
still people of the air.

Learn the music of a summer night by the restless wave
of the sea, or surrender to the sunlight
of an open country where the illimitable
sky at last meets to kiss the sweet, green earth,
and stay till the crimson shafts
burn the western world;

And something will rise in you that is not connected
with the tiring routine of your trade—
something strange and calm.

GOOD NIGHT.

Good night, thou sweet, old world, good night;
Enfold me in the gentle light
Of other days, when gleams
Of dewy meadows held my dreams;
And quiet walks, as day sank low,
Dispelled each touch of woe.
Let me forget these joys be gone,
But feel them coming on
From out the past, with laughter's cries
And dream-enamored skies
Of old. One hand let me hold tight.
Good night, thou sweet, old world, good night.

In The Gardens Of Amour.

YES OR NO.

I know my heart and yet I answer not,
For some I've seen grow sad by deep regret.
Better than love that fails is solitude,
Barren and hungry-hearted to the last.
It has still the happiness of day dreams,
For love that fails awakes the sleeper quick
With ruthless hands of saddened memory.
Better is solitude that still is sweet
In thought and not unkindly looked upon,
Whose virgin cheeks remember not love's kiss
At break of dawn nor in night's deepest sleep,
Whose breast is strange to touch of children lips.
Far better ne'er to know love's throbbing joy
Than sadly to remember love is dead,
And hear cold words that once were soft and sweet,
And feel no more the press of eager arms
Where oft thy head did lie in bliss at eve,
And deign to beg where once thou didst permit.
Give me stern love that's fierce in jealousy,
Ardent, like love that's born by open fields
'Mid silence save the soft winds whispering,

FROM A PAINTING BY SIR JOHN MILLAIS

YES OR NO

And grows each starry night by garden stile,
And lingers late before the last farewell;
So strange and wondrous sweet it would not part
But for the swiftly moving pallid stars
That call ere long the noiseless break of dawn;
Love that does not forget the first sweet kiss,
The gentle, hesitating touch of hand,
That blissful calm that made us one at first
By cheerful glow of winter evening fire;
Such love that stronger grows through changing years,
When age shall steal the rose from off my cheek
And dim my eyes and bend me slowly down.
And in that distant time wilt thou forget
The ancient trees 'neath which we sat at dusk,
And how, like twilight's spreading dark, our souls
Went forth with night's still music o'er the world,
And we both dwelt again in olden times
By glistening shores of golden liquid seas,
And heard the echoed songs of all the world
Resound as softer grew the thickening dark?
Love's music old, wilt thou then break the reed
In twain by cruel neglect of thy warm lips,
Or wilt thou find the music sweeter still,

Like early childhood's oft repeated songs?
Though I pale before thee on life's long way,
Wilt thou then still find joy in all my smiles?
And sit with gladness by my side at eve?
And walk with me through memory's olden lanes,
To mark again the hallowed spots where first
Thou kissed my cheek and shyly spoke my name—
Where once with saddened hearts we quarreled awhile,
And thou with moistened eyes besought my love,
Which was again thine own ere thou didst ask—
And where in shade of yonder sighing woods
Oft tranced I sat and listened to thy hopes,
And silently implored a part in all
Close by thy side through joyous coming years?
When once I give thee all wilt thou forget,
In stress of other things, to kiss the lips
That yearn for thee by lonely evening light?
Then wilt thou whisper in my ear as now,
And set astir the chords of love's sweet dream,
And say the things that draw me close to thee
Ere slumber close our eyes in still of night?
I hear again thy oft repeated vows.
Would thou wert nigh to still my wavering thoughts,
And speak once more the words that are my bliss—
That feed my heart which thou hast hunger taught.

TO YOU WHO COME AT EVENING.

I know you oft have told me, dear,
The world is full of hate and strife;
But I'm content with you and life—
With you each night beside me here.

You often fear that I am sad,
Because some things you think I miss;
I would not lose a single kiss
For that which makes some persons glad.

And when you touch me with your hand,
And say the words you used to say,
Why—all the night is turned to day,
And I forget the things I'd planned.

And often when we here have sat,
And I have said, "Tell me again,"
I've seen you smile a bit, but then,
You see, we women live on that.

We women love that we may live;
The heart is hungry, too, and I—
No matter if you don't know why—
Well, I'm content with what you give.

'TIS RAINING NOW.

'Tis raining now
And love is past,
And from the brow
Of day at last
The with'ring night
Shuts out the light
Until to-morrow.

Ah, well, let be—
The sun will rise
By morning's knell
From out the skies.
Though love's not mine,
The sun will shine
Again to-morrow.

AFTER DAY.

Draw your chair beside me here,
As in other times, my dear;
Needn't talk, or even smile,
Sit in silence for awhile.
Knowing you're beside me so,
As the light is burning low,
And the night is growing cool,
While the stilly hours rule—
Just contentment over all
As the shadows on us fall,—
'Tis the best of all our life,
After each day's toil and strife,
In the time of night and dew,
Thus to sit alone with you.

A WOMAN'S QUESTION.

Am I not meek?
I give my hand, my lips, my cheek,
My dear, to you—
My life, my soul; and shall not rue.

Sink deep in joy
And revel long, I'll be thy toy,
My dear; from now
To play the part you'll teach me how.

To thy demands
Of dawn and dark, though like the sands,
My dear, I yield.
Wilt thou my agéd heartaches shield?

Thy heart's caprice,
For all of me, will it ne'er cease,
My dear, to cling
To both the flesh and soul I bring?

LET PASS.

To J. F. R.

Let pass, dear heart, let pass
This pain, this brief distress that grieves thee so—
These unkind words, and doubtful glancing eyes
In which till now had shone but kindly looks;
I say let pass the talk of talkers all.
Not one still star of all the night knows aught
Of their ill words, nor does the growing green
In stilly woods where plays the summer sun,
Nor shall the days that come to thee anon,
Nor shall the gentle rain of summers nigh,
Nor olden paths that sweetly greet thy feet.
Thy soul's deep purposes they do not know;
Or knowing, still they could not understand.
Keep thou yet on the way thou lovest best,
For none of all the world knows it as thou,
And all the precious facts that are thy life.
Therefore, this brief distress that grieves thee so,
Let pass, dear heart, let pass.

THE LOVES OF OTHER YEARS.

Where are they,
The loves of other years,
The smiles, the walks in evening still,
The limpid, lithesome, fancy-worlds
With cherished secrets none shall know
Of childish hopes and fears—
Where are they,
The loves of other years?

Where are they,
The loves of other years,
When sunny paths led through the fields,
Oft trod by feet that hastened not,
To cooling, shady woods where dwelt
Sweet endless dreams of life's good cheers—
Where are they,
The loves of other years?

Where are they,
The loves of other years,
The eyes of faith, the timid touch
And gentle voice, the dainty step
Across the silvery, singing creek,
The face that ever still appears—
Where are they,
The loves of other years?

Where are they,
The loves of other years,
The lips that sang the nursery songs,
And they that in the noiseless night,
In whispers low and unforgot,
Betrayed their hearts with laughs and tears—
Where are they,
The loves of other years?

Where are they,
The loves of other years—
In some far world of endless bliss,
With sweet caress and hand in hand,
Do they again live as on earth?
O Thou, whose love my question hears,
Where are they,
The loves of other years?

Where are they,
The loves of other years?
Old memory will not let them pass.
Though faded be the pictures now
In dusty bygone galleries old,
Again I ask as evening nears—
Where are they,
The loves of other years?

THE DREAM.

I thought I lived with you beneath a sun
Whose golden rays ne'er left the deep blue sky,
But shone and shone where rolling meadows lie,
With playful smile spring's blossoms wooed in fun,
And danced in leafy vales where waters run
And where the sweet brook's murmurs never die,
And on the mountain peaks so still and high
Which all but fearless strong-winged birds must shun.
I thought that time went sweet and soft and slow,
And left no marks save those of gentleness
That bound thee to my life with strong caress;
And I saw naught but all thy soul's deep truth,
No fading bloom, nor form the years bent low,
But ever still the beauty of thy youth.

WHERE LOVE ABIDES.

Where love abides
There is no talk of duties mine and yours;
The ever glowing light within allures
Each willing foot and hand
To move or still to stand
Whate'er betides—
Where love abides.

Where love abides
There is no grief or secret inner thought
Or plan or longing hope the day has wrought
But each may fully know
The purport high or low;
And no one chides
Where love abides.

Where love abides
The first gray gloom of leaden falling dark
Brings joy; and each will hasten and will hark
To hear that sweet old sound,
As footsteps oft resound
At eventides—
Where love abides.

Where love abides
The tender buds of gentleness within
Will bloom the day had stifled 'mid the din;
And solitude grows sweet
Where hands so quickly meet
And lips besides—
Where love abides.

Where love abides
The silvery breaking dawn once more finds mates
United in their secret themes and fates
Forever and a day;
And so runs life away
In goodly strides
Where love abides.

THE BRIDE.

You tremble, dear. See, I am not afraid,
And all myself I give, my heart is light;
The crimson on my cheek should flee in fright,
And yet does not; 'tis there delayed
Because I have no fear. I oft have prayed,
With warming breath of whispers in the night
For this sweet hour with you, and tight
Have clasped my hands, as in my thoughts you strayed.
My lips I've saved for you and all the cheer
That summer's dewy morns tossed in my heart
That, when at eve you're wearied, I might start
Some trifling little talk which all the fear
Of morrows and the day should swiftly part
From you, and make you glad that I was near.

A BACHELOR'S WINTER EVENING REVERY.

You didn't think,
When last we stood
Together near the margin of the wood,
And looked o'er rolling valleys' snowy lands,
With toying, tight-clasped hands
And eyes that fancied years
Of joy and lover's cheers—
I say, you didn't think deep in your heart
That time would drive us—O so far apart?

And do you mind
How I made through
The drifted fleecy snow a path for you,
And how the evening's dark came o'er us slow
And in the distance low
Gleamed cheering household fires bright,
And then the peaceful night?
I say, and do you mind how long I'd stay
Near you while evening hours slipped away?

I cannot think—
I will not think
That all is done and past and there's no link
In that old chain of memory that will
Draw us together still,
Though many a winter's snow has gone
And dark and stilly dawn,
I say, I cannot think I've had life's due
Until again I've made a path for you.

A path for you—
A path for you!
'Mid dear old fancy's snow, if you but knew,
In stilly winter eves, within the wood
Where silent we oft stood,
A many a path for you I've made
Where winds had barriers laid.
But one—just one more path I claim my due,
The long one through the blooms and snows with you.

TO-MORROW I'M AWAY.

Come here and take my hand
And press my lips,
Just for today—
To-morrow I'm away;
With pulsing heart
And quickened feet
I'll tread another street;
And in the toils
Of duty's net
I may sometimes forget
You for awhile,
And this sweet day
In life's all stormy way;
And oft I'll know
The want of heart
Again life's work to start,
So press my lips
Just for today—
To-morrow I'm away.

THE DEAD WIFE.

O thou whose lips I've pressed in hush of night,
Whose tiny hand has trembled in my own
Beneath the talking boughs the wind has blown,
Hid snugly from the evening's starry light—
O thou, my all, why hast thou quit my sight?
Thy straggling curls will no more touch my cheek,
Thy voice and smile are gone where'er I seek
With watchful eyes and my strong passion's might.
If all my soul's deep grief thou now dost see,
If thou dost know the lonely inward tears
My heart hath shed along the saddened years,
Break through thy silent doors to life and me,
Who hourly watch and wait with trembling fears,
Lest in the realm of death I know not thee.

Love's Tragic Convention.

I.

AT THE DANCE.

We circled oft the hall in varying motions,
And talked, through all the music wrought,
Of friends and dress and common things;
But here is the speech I thought:

"Before the night has yielded all its music
And the dance is o'er and dawn is here,
And the dream waltz plays as each sleeps on,
O say you love me, dear!

"I hold you near to me; you are my captive;
And the mellow night is full of dew,
And as the winking, sleepy stars
Wink on, I dance with you.

"O say you love me, dear, while yet the music
Still trembles through the waves of night,
Your fallen curls creep o'er my face,
And the house of life is light.

"For o'er and o'er again this evening's dancing
I'll dance with you in memory's hall,
And feel your whispers on my cheek
And the rebel curls that fall.

"And when life's lonely way grows hard and narrow,
And some great lord your hand shall sue,
I'll then remember fondly still
That I have danced with you."

Instead, we talked of friends and dress and nothings;
And the silent speech my heart had said
Lay silent still, and the dance wore on,
Till the dance and night were fled.

II.

VERSES TO A WEDDED SWEET HEART.

I am not rich in spirit now,
I should not write at all;
But rather calmly hold my peace
While leaves and raindrops fall.

The autumn days are passing fast
And chilly winds now moan,

And frosty winter comes again
To find me still alone.

I only wished to say to you,
Whom time's unending flight
Has borne so far away from me,
I think of you tonight.

I think of you tonight again;
Again you are with me,
In other autumns long ago
Beside the talking sea.

Again the sea gulls soar and dip,
The waves break on the sand;
You whisper in my ear again
And hold me by the hand.

And long we sit content with life,
While twilight shades the sea,
And one by one the stars appear—
Again you sit with me.

The music of a thousand worlds
Now fills the gloaming eve,

And olden songs sing out again—
We slowly rise to leave.

And though the world grow gray with night
And misty winds turn chill,
And village lights peep in the dark—
With me you wander still.

And on and on. At last we pause,
And stand awhile to say
Good night, again a sweet good night,
And turning I'm away.

I loath to break this golden dream
Of olden days long past,
Of crimson skies and dew and dawn,
It holds my spirit fast.

I only wished to say to you,
Whom time's unending flight
Has borne so far away from me,
I think of you tonight.

But I'll obey convention, dear,
And censure's frowns eschew;
And so I'll tear these verses up
That I have sung to you.

III.

AND EACH PASSED ON.

I have been at the house of a friend;
An evening feast was laid;
I met there a woman about my own age.
We desired to know each other;
And both tried; but I lacked the cleverness,
And she the courage;
We did not break through the crust of conventionalities
Of our over-civilized generation.
Had we been children of the woods and fields,
Of the rude earth,
Then we might have spoken;
But as it was, we brushed elbows in the night,
And each passed on.

IV.

FOR NEITHER DARED.

He saw her once,
And mused that day and in the night till late,
A-wond'ring what might be their fate
If fortune brought them near.

Again he saw,
Again he builded castles in the years.
But could he win who'd known such tears
That flowed beneath a smile?

And once again—
And she with wand'ring eyes, like his, went on,
For neither dared. Now the day is gone;
But still he dreams his dream.

V.

WHILE A SEASON CHANGED.

While a season changed I lingered in a strange city,
filled with men and women and children,
just as other cities,
With buildings and trade and the petty histories of each,
and the petty histories of families
preserved by word of lips.
With nightly entertainments and spectacles, with actors
and orators and pleasant singers,
with ministers, with rich and poor,
just as other cities;
But all has passed out of me now except the
still face of a solitary woman
looking at me through the dim years.

BY CLARENCE WHITE

HER SOLITUDE

VI.

HER SOLITUDE.

My life is still tonight, no bitterness,
Nor joy, and but one endless thought creeps out,
As dreaming here I sit and think about
My days that soon shall fade and grow still less.
And yet, O God! I cannot, cannot guess
Why lonely I must dwell and ever doubt
The time will come when he, my own, will rout
My fears and all my restless heart's distress.
Why didst thou plant in me this longing so
That in my wake and sleep forever calls
And yet beyond my pail of fortune falls?

Not always I'll be young, the bloom will go.
All this, O God! I have not understood.
Am I not worthy—have not I been good?

VII.

I PUT YOU ASIDE.

I put you aside
With slow and gentle hands
And silent inner grief,
For fear that dreary days
Will both betide—
And yet I put you aside.

I put you aside,
Though my one light of life
Go out, and all that made
This world so beautiful
Shall pass and hide—
And yet I put you aside.

I put you aside:
The world (and God, some say,)
Command—I knowing well
The heart no more will wake
That here has died—
And yet I put you aside.

I put you aside,
(O God, what recompense
Can'st thou make me when oft
In evening's loneliness
My soul thee chide!)
And yet I put you aside.

VIII.

HE WILL COME.

He will come, she said
Deep in her bounding, girlish heart, and smiled
With confidential lips,
And childhood's dreaming fancies wild
That over blissful pathways led—
He will come, she said.

He will come, she said,
As many daily tasks and years came on;
And from her cherry lips
And cheeks the girlish glow had gone;
And though her glad, wild dreams had fled—
He will come, she said.

He will come, she said,
As o'er the mellow chords of her pure heart
The hand of bitterness
Oft now and then a tune would start,
When some old playmate's life was wed—
He will come, she said.

He will come, she said,
And sweetly smiled with faith again serene
In that one perfect love
Beyond the faded and the green
Of earth. Ere last they laid her dead,
He has come, she said.

IX.

UPON NEPONSET'S SHORE.

At eve hard by Neponset's crystal wave—
Neponset's gleaming wave—
I saw her last. The night was wild,
The dark fell fast, and cold the blast,
And all alone she ran;
Along the snowy path no sound she gave
That eve hard by Neponset's crystal wave.

Her pallid face, part hid by fallen hair,
Long, streaming, waving hair,
The wind made rise and fall and curl;
And wild the guise about her eyes
As she ran by me swift,
All open at the throat, her arms both bare,
Her pallid face part hid by fallen hair.

I watched her as she sped along the night,
The glimmer of the night,
Till she was gone. I went to rest,
Yet ever on until the dawn
She ran within my sleep,
Her hair awry, her face a haggard white—
I watched her as she sped along the night.

Next morn as I walked on the frozen shore,
Neponset's blustrous shore,
I saw barred tight a mourning house,
To mark the flight a soul that night
Had made. Of one I asked,
"Who's dead?"—"The love-mad huss," she is no more—
Was found at dawn upon the frozen shore."

Now ever on that gusty, fitful shore,
Neponset's icy shore,
I see her go through night's wild blast,
In lonely woe, still to and fro;
The marble face, the eyes
Of withered white—she paces evermore
Upon Neponset's fitful, icy shore.

WHEN I COME HOME

When I come home will you be there to greet
Me with a smile and outstretched arms,
A heart of quickened beat,
When our eyes meet?

And will you tell me all your thoughts and deeds,
As in the gloaming night again
We take the path that leads
O'er grassy meads?

And as of old will you my grief beguile—
The grief the weary days have brought?
And will you make me smile
With you the while?

And as the mellow years come on, will you
Remember still that love is young
And fresh as morning dew
For me and you?

I'm coming home ere long to you who wait
So patiently as seasons go,
Beside the woodland gate
In evening's late.

In fancy's eye a thousand times I see
You there with eager, anxious look
That scans the rolling lea
In search for me.

I see you run into my arms at last,
And feel the tremor of your lips,
That softly words would cast
Which oft have passed.

I'm coming home ere long to you who wait
So patiently as seasons go,
Beside the woodland gate
In evenings late.

BEAUTY.

Though withered be the cheeks and eyes,
  Like some dead rose at dawn;
Oft know the soul and in surprise
  The withered things are gone.
Sunbeams the rose's red replace;
  The soul's the sun unto the face.

A MAN AND A WOMAN.

A man and a woman once
walked in the evening to a wood,
that the trees might hide them from the light.

Far into the deep shadows wandered they,
when one said, in fear, "Let us return."
(No matter which one said it.)

Still they wandered in the dark,
watching the light within themselves,
as it glowed in the garden of their love.

The night came over the world and the wood.
Seeing they had tarried too long,
they determined to return at dawn.

Well, it is a silly story;
but—do you know—
it never grew morning in that wood again.

I FLING THEE TO THE WINDS.

Thou faded rose—thou faded rose!
How many poets, God but knows,
Have sung of thee, thou withered flow'r,
That I have kept unto this hour.

And thou art brown, thy leaves are dead;
Long years thy master has been wed,
And quite forgot the boyish hand
That plucked thee up in yon woodland.

And pressed thee to his lips and mine,
And said, "Our love, like some old wine,
Shall with the years but sweeter grow,"
Then kissed me, in that long ago.

Thou faded rose! I give thee up
Once more to earth, and no more sup
Thy memory's olden wine; but fling
Thee on the winds the night doth bring.

PARTING.

I hate to part from you, my dear.
I hold your hand and say
Good-bye, you hear?
But somehow yet I stay
Near where you are while moments pass.
And is it true you're sad
As I, alas?
Or maybe glad,
And only tremble so for fears
That I should deeply grieve
From inward tears
Before I leave.
I cannot tell what life will be
So far away from you.
Then you'll miss me?
And is it true
That here you'll stand in early night,
Remembering how still
We've seen day's light
Descend yon hill
That now is hid in mellow gloom
With magic memories laid

Of love's sweet bloom
That shall not fade?
And will you wish me well, my dear,
As time goes on so fast,
Until I'm here
By you at last?
And tell me you will not forget
The stilly eve our eyes
First shyly met
In wild surprise.
But now they look away from me
Toward the gloaming hill.
Is is to see
The night fall still?
I know you see what's in my heart,
And have seen—O so oft!
I cannot start,
Your hand is soft
In mine; your lips now tremble, too;
You know the words I'd say
Just now to you
While yet I stay.
And thus, they'll out, I love you so
That part of me would die—
But, then, you know,
And so—Good-bye.

TO BE WITH YOU.

To be with you this evening, rarest of the evenings all,
And listen to the whispering leaves and to the night bird's call,
The silvery moonlight on your face—
To be with you in some still place.

To be with you and watch the tiny budding myriad stars,
Wee far-off golden worlds beyond the earth's unkindly jars,
As quietly they march night's sea
Above the world and you and me.

To be with you somewhere within this evening's mystic shade,
To hear your plans and hopes and tell you mine, all unafraid
That you'd forget to hold them dear
When I'm away and you're not here.

To be with you and listen to the harp of summer's breeze,
Alone with night and wavering stars, beneath the lisping trees,
To feel the cool of falling dew—
To be somewhere alone with you.

To be with you this evening, rarest of the evenings all,
And listen to the whispering leaves and to the night bird's call,
The silvery moonlight on your face—
To be with you in some still place.

LOVE'S PARADOX.

Here is my hand,
It holds my heart,
You understand.

And with it goes
Whate'er may come
Of joys and woes.

It is my all
I give to you
This even's fall.

My hand—take it—
Gently—the heart—
You will break it!

And yet I know
'Twill surely break
If you let go.

SPRING.

A wayward, careless girl, they say thou art,
Wild Spring, whose gurgling laugh is loud and shrill,
Whose parted, panting lips beg kisses quick;
And open at the throat thou hast a will
To lure lone lovers to the meshes thick.
Thou shouldst be lodged safe in a wintry clime
To cure thee of thy wantonness with youth,
And made to hold thy frosted nose where chime
The icy winds to chill thy blood forsooth.
Thou wayward, careless girl, thou shouldst be taught
To handle gently hearts of men and maids
Round places where thy mischief thou hast wrought
In witching nooks laid deep with greenish shades.

JUST AS OF OLD.

We walked these woods together, you and I;
'Twas long ago, beneath this selfsame sky;
And rustled, too, just such brown, withered leaves
In time's old stilly, cooling autumn eves.
And here we sat together once beside
This spreading tree on that calm eventide,
When first a flood of life's strange light came o'er
Us both, and faintly whispered evermore
That all was well, and only gentle ways
Lay out beyond, lit by these selfsame rays.
And then, as now, the amber sky grew dark;
And low and sweet the call of dove and lark
Stole o'er the falling night, and fireflies
Strolled through the blesséd gloom in weird disguise.
Your words were liquid then and soft and went
Straight to my heart as if by masters sent.
'Twas long ago these evenings here with you,
And many a sun and storm and morning's dew
Has come and gone about these stilly trees,
And there upon the ever-blowing leas
Has bloomed and died each summer's tender leaf.
And all is well, as then, and there's no grief;

But ever still I see you there as last
We walked, before the years so quickly passed;
And ever still each calling bird at night
Brings forth your face in unforgetful light,
And memories old that make life still a dream,
As when we watched the sun's last fading beam.
Where'er you are, the heart that youth did hold—
It still is yours, e'en now, just as of old.

IF YOU WOULD SAY.

If you would say
What's in your heart the livelong day,
While I am waiting, waiting still
To hear your voice, like some sweet rill,
Proclaim an end to this delay—
If you would say.

If you would say
You know my faults, yet bid me stay
Where your sweet face I'd always see
Through years and all eternity,
My deeds would then each joy repay—
If you would say.

If you would say—
Henceforth through meads and woods we'd stray,
And arm in arm go all the while
Through open fields each lengthening mile
'Mid sweetest scent of fallen hay—
If you would say.

If you would say—
Then in the silent fall of day,

When one by one the stars appear,
Close by your side I'd have no fear
Of grieving doubts or wild dismay—
If you would say.

If you would say—
Then for the gift of thee I'd pray
A prayer of thanks to Him who stole
The sea's soft music for thy soul,
And lit thine eyes with magic's ray—
If you would say.

THE LOVELESS MARVELED.

She had a sorrow once,
Born of bliss;
'Twas but a hand, a voice,
A lover's kiss.

It grew like mountain trees,
Strong and tall.
This sorrow grew to be
Her all in all.

It touched her lips to song.
Over reeds
Her fingers played—her hands
To kindly deeds.

The loveless marveled much,
Seeing this;
Not understanding aught
The lover's kiss.

HEART'S COMMAND.

Love some one—in God's name love some one—
For this is the bread of the inner life,
Without which a part of you will starve and die;

And though you feel you must be stern, even hard,
In your life of affairs, make for yourself at
Least a little corner, somewhere in the
Great world, where you may unbosom and be kind.

I SHALL COME TO HER.

If some there be with agéd mien
  Who wisely smile at love,
And say 'tis but a childish dream
  And one they are above,

To them I say who sit and smile,
  Because they so prefer,
I pray I shall not die until
  My feet have come to her.

I know somewhere tonight she sits
  Within her father's home,
While I a foot-loose wanderer
  Am destined still to roam.

But I shall find her out I know,
  And thus within her place
She calmly sits and waits for me,
  And she will know my face.

And one sweet day, we two shall meet,
  Whatever may occur;
And so content I wander on,
  For I shall come to her.

THE ONE WOMAN.

How could I help but love you, coming up a cool and radiant
fountain in the hot and dreary night of life?
I swear the sins of youthful women lay upon my hands, the
grimy sweat of wearied men in strife,
Who'd clothed my body with garments fair, and the agonies
of children, too, condemned to toil that I might freely
live—
I swear the cries of beaten slaves turned not my ear, nor wails
of stunted children that the sea of want doth give.
There was no order in my days. I slept and ate as instinct
called, and heeded every wanton passion near,
A face, a form, a game of chance, the gossip of the idle wags,
and live to finish quickly earth's career.
And though I shall regret what now I here confess, and cringing
turn from this swift lash that o'er my back I send—
I swear that thing called soul had not set torch within the blood-
stained walls where creaked my heart, bent on low
passion's end.
How could I help but love you, coming like a balmy light into
the dead and moonless night of empty years?
You spoke and I saw the blood of murdered innocence glare red
upon my hands, and heard the wailing sea of tears.

You touched my hand, and through my restless life stole scenes
of quiet woods and dancing shafts of gold upon the
green;
As asphodels and running vines, and shades and linnets' songs,
and the softly sounding lyre of doves perched high
unseen.
Things I had dreamed of in my dreaming childhood came again,
and solitude with you was what I longed for most;
Out of other distant worlds remembered visions sprang that
long ere earthly birth I knew 'mid God's immortal host.
And when I kissed your lips this world was born again, and in
the still and starry night I was with you and God;
And truth and mercy bloomed within my soul, and kindly
words bred fast upon my lips, and bliss came where I
trod.
And long I lay upon the grassy earth, your hand in mine, and
listened to your voice that showed the better way;
And your own God I learned to love, but loved you more o'er
all I ever knew, you who were fated not to say.
If I am aught and tired men and weary women know my
voice, and smile amid their tears, it is for you;
And if a song has left my lips, some clear and simple song that
comforts brings within some lonely heart of rue,
It is not mine, but comes from out the mellow shaded woods

of memory now mouldering in the faded past;
And if the springtide and the autumn bring reborn the songs of life, it is because your spirit holds me fast—
Because I pressed my lips to yours in the secret, voiceless woods where asphodels and running vines forever blow,
And where the linnet and the dove sing songs alternately unto the hearts that hear and understand and know.

ONE OF LONG AGO.

Hast never sat with sadness in the stilly, stilly night,
When all the dancing day's bright beams of sun had gone to flight,
And through the pulseless falling dark a luring wind sang low
The music that the stars march to so silently and slow?

Hast never sat and thought of one, 'mid sad old memory's tears,—
One who had lived within your heart through all the joyous years?
'Tis sweet this sadness that comes on when night begins to fall,
And spreads its silent softening dark through chamber doors and hall.

It is the only heritage that time has left me now;
And on its steady course it keeps my vessel's shattered prow.
And thus in corners of each life you'll find some hidden face
That through the years keeps marching on and holds each soul in place.

So let the night grow thicker still and breezes turn to storm,

There's armored safe within my heart and free from earthly
harm
This smiling face of one who looks into my eyes e'en now,
While through the world I go alone till snow lies on my brow.

In Rebellion

AMERICA.

Lincoln, rise up from out thy tomb today,
Thou lover of the lives of common men,
America hath work for thee again.
Here women want in sight of wealth's display,
Man grinds his brother down and holds a sway
As in the times of bloody lash and den,
Save now the flesh is white, not black as then.
In toiling holes young girls grow old, decay.
Though thou art dead could but thy soul return
In one who loved his fellow men as thou;
Instead of greed that we might justice learn,
Love character in place of gold as now,
Write far across our native land's sweet soil,
"Here none shall live upon another's toil."

TO THE MASTERS OF MEN.

They that toil—
What have they done
That they should beg
To work and run
By your command?
I cannot understand.

They that toil—
Why do they fear
Some heartless ill
When you draw near
Their slavish life,
Bound to unending strife?

They that toil—
Some day they'll know
This earth is for
Them too, and lo!
Who shall withstand
Their loud and fierce command?

They that toil—
They slumber low;

But they shall wake
And they shall know
Their mighty power
In that strange reckoning hour.

They that toil—
God made them too
With love of life
No less than you—
'Mid breaking storms
They'll come in myriad swarms.

Therefore, O
Ye masters all!
Ere whirlwinds rise
And temples fall
And daylight wane,
On earth let justice reign!

THOU THAT ART IDLE BORN.

Thou that art idle born—knowest thou the weariness of toil,
When the flesh refuses and cries "no farther,"
And the soul believes no longer in God,
And the night and the glorious day are hateful;
When fear of want knocks ever at thy door,
And evil dreams harass thy sleep?

There are none such, sayest thou,
O beautiful one that art idle born!
They are in thy house, in the street, everywhere.
They adore thee, thy beauty, thy imperious manner,
Thy placid eyes, and thy careless self-assurance,
Thy soft, white flesh—
Thou—thou that art idle born!

What great virtue is thine
That God has so elevated thee
That men and women children serve thee,
Yet thou servest not at all?
And what crime have they committed
Who serve always yet are never served?
Does God not also love them?

No bitterness to thee that art idle born—
Only be thou gentle and kind,
And touch with thy soft hand the leaden brow,
Grown ill and old in service;
And with thy beautiful face and thy body,
And the things that cover thy beautiful body,
Give thou no offense.

Soon the shadows gather
And creep over the garden of thy soul,
And it grows still with thee,
Thy memories fading like an evening's twilight,
And thou sleepest in thy last chamber,
And the vain flesh is humble!
Thou—thou that art idle born!

EGO IPSE.

All the questions have I asked,
All things have I tried;
But nothing satisfied.
"There is no vital task
Except to wait till time has fled
And I am dead,"
I said.

Thus I walked in living death,
Smiled at God's great trick
Of life, till I grew sick
Of smiles; and then in breath
All hot and vile with bitter cry
I prayed that I
Might die.

Back I pushed all human creeds,
Standing lone and nude
With God in solitude,
And lo! from out the weeds
Of human thought I looked in awe,
MYSELF I saw
Was law.

SUNDAY NIGHT.

Back to the world to-morrow morn,
Back to the white-heat world,
To grinding barter, sweat and swirl,
Back to the lips with anger curled.

I'd linger here in the still, still night,
With stars and the clear, clean sky,
And gentle words, and slowing steps
Of worshipers going by.

Does life demand so much of food,
Of costly raiment rare
That but an hour may be plucked
From all the days of care?

The world is sold to the mammon god;
The many serve the few,
And whips crack loud o'er myriad heads
Each hour to starve or do.

Back to the world tomorrow morn,
Back to the white-heat world,
To grinding barter, sweat and swirl,
Back to the lips with anger curled.

IF YOU HAVE MADE GENTLER THE CHURLISH WORLD.

If you have spoken something beautiful,
Or touched the dead canvas to life,
Or made the cold stone to speak—
You who know the secret heart of beauty;
If you have done one thing
That has made gentler the churlish world,
Though mankind pass you by,
And feed and cloth you grudgingly—
Though the world starve you,
And God answer not your nightly prayers,
And you grow old hungering still at heart,
And walk friendless in your way,
And lie down at last forgotten—
If all this befall you who have created beauty,
You shall still leave a bequest to the world
Greater than institutions and rules and commerce;
And by the immutable law of human heart
The God of the universe is your debtor,
If you have made gentler the churlish world.

THE LIFE THAT NEVER DREAMS.

The life that never dreams, nor now and then in
the still night consults the oracle
of the stars,
Nor considers the mystery and beauty of our
world and golden worlds in the ocean
of eve as they burst through the waves of dark,
Nor sees any love and tenderness in men, but
dwells always in the things of its own flesh—
That life, though bearing the semblance of
spiritual man, proud of his immortal destiny,
is still with the lower orders of being,
Insensible to the enchantments that are born
out of the beauty of the world.

THE TASK.

I know I do not understand this world,
This universe of life and growth and death.
I do not damn the Maker, saying still
Within myself that surely all is well.
The myriad stars shine nightly in the sky,
The earth yields forth her budding brood in spring,
And always dawn and noon and dark succeed;
Volcanoes burst and flooding rains descend,
And sprigs shoot forth where barren winter lay;
The piping winds bound through the bending trees,
And withered leaves again return to earth;
Soft lips grow hard and tresses gold turn gray;
Sweet babes are born, and stooping, agéd men
Depart into the soft and silent night.
And not one jot of all this can I change.

Nor you, my metaphysics peddling friend,
Explaining how the cosmis wheels go round.
I, too, was once a trader in that junk,
And oft have strutted in the lecture room,

Showing all my choicest wares to students bland:
Kant's *Dinge an sich* I doled in precious lots
To scholars, in return for which they gave
A year of nightly brooding, swearing still
'Twas worth the price to be so well equipped
For life. (I know they cursed me later on,
As I my pompous masters, too, have cursed.)
And gloomy Shopenhauer's raging *Will*
I crammed into the throats of sweet young men;
And all the other tribes of babbling seers
I sold with profit to myself, until
At last my heart awoke and called me fool —
Called me fool, for I had seen how each
By reason stoutly contradicted each;
Saw the world submerged in theories wild,
Saw all things proven which men pleased to think,
Until my mind 'mid contradiction fell.
But o'er the dreams of philosophic seers,
I heard with certain ear the moaning cries
That burst from out the souls of human want.
These alone, when all else failed, were real!

And you, my dealers in theology,
Forgetting Christ in man-made thoughts of him,

And calling loud for patrons everywhere,
Know you the chambers in the house of God?
Just how He made the thing and of what stuff?
With Christ have you walked through the pits of hell?
And do you know the souls of mortals doomed?
Who told you all the secret ways of God,
That you may dole the keys of paradise
To them that buy in fear your ragged wares?
Back to the vales of darkness all ye mongers
That steal of earth its joy, and fill the world
With midnight mists of ignorance and fear!
With all your wisdom not a raindrop more
Nor less shall fall to quench the thirst of earth.

Amid the pedantry of mountebanks,
Parading wrathful gods with hornéd heads,
The silent universe goes on its way,
Scornful of twaddling bugs' sophistic lore.
The myriad stars shine nightly in the sky,
The earth yields forth her budding brood in spring;
All nature moves as by a hand unseen.
And not one jot of all this can I change,
Nor you, my mortal friend, whoe'er you are.
Ignorant am I of cosmic things,

And you, and ignorant shall ever be.
But we are not forlorn in wild despair:
We still may turn our eyes across the night,
All lustrous in the gold of other worlds,
Where seas of dark reach on to seas of dawn,
And whisper to the silent soul within,
That all's in place in this God-impassioned world.

But there are things my eyes have often seen
That stop the crimson rivers of the heart,
That cause the breath to halt ere it rush forth
To mingle with the breathings of the world.
Not cosmic things no human hand can change,
Nor tampered history, sacred of profane,
The bouncing ball of babbling pedantry.
But worlds of faces damned ere they did leave
The yielding womb to be despised of men,
Born slaves to know the lash from childhood frail,
And fed into the mouths of mammoth mills
Where Christian lords pile up their godless gold.
What boots the question here of trinity?

And I have seen ill-shapen women stare
From sorrow sodden faces early old.

Plodding on to toil they went at dawn,
Childless, homeless, solitary souls.
Once these were young and sweet to look upon,
And fit for babes to bloom upon their breasts,
Like drowsy roses dewey fresh at dawn.
These oft had whispered prayers for lover's kiss
That's born of righteous love in stilly night,
And dreamed the dream but women understand
Of unborn babes that smiled within their sleep,
Nightly clamoring to be born of them.
Unloved they wandered in a loveless world
To join the women dead from early times,
The helots mute of wanton avarice.
What grief so great to wither in the bud,
And ne'er press tight the moistened lips of love,
To dream of music that one may not hear,
And miss the clinging arms at break of dawn!
And millions yet shall die with withered breasts
Where babes have never touched their tender lips.

And I have heard the cries of younger men
That saw no more the stars above their heads,
Shut ever in by trade's benighting bog—
Young men that still did hold to early dreams,

O'ermatched by them whose cunning had no heart,
And left the prey of human vulture's greed
With saddened eyes that kindly looked at death.
No love's embrace to speed their nightly coming,
Nor children clamoring for sweet caress,
And claiming yet another fabled story
Ere led by gentle hands to dreamland's door;
Lonely followers of goodness still,
Though laughed to scorn by them whom they did serve.
What earthly captain with his spoils of trade
Shall right the wrongs of these that lie so still,
If God perchance forget again to touch
To conscious life these earthly scar-marked souls,
And light again the citadels of thought?
O who will close the wounds of these that fell
Before the piping spears of avarice?
And here and there, I know, the sweet green earth,
Where now some quiet planter turns the soil,
Shall once again be wet with human blood;
And oft again the knife shall deftly rise
To strike a brother down in godless wars,
And children weep again o'er grassy mounds,
And stooping women, from whose face the rose
Has fled, shall think again of early love;

And younger women dream what might have been.
And all for what? That traffic patriots
May wreck for profit's sake the weaker nations.
O profit, crowned on high as earthly king,
Stretching thy blood-stained hand across the world,
Well armed with bible, rum and edgéd blade,
To thee a life is but a leaf of grass;
Thy ears are deaf to stunted children's wails,
And dumb thy palsied tongue to mercy's word!
Thou soulless low-browed god of gloated gold,
When shall we shake thee off, and once again
Build up the kingdom of the human heart!

The fight to live is now with man, not nature.
The goodly earth yields but by touch of hand
Enough for all. But o'er the bloom of fields,
And treasures hid deep down, and useful craft,
The misered hand of greed crawls in the night;
And all the air is charged with words of gain,
From trader's shop unto the thrones of art.
The smell of profit clings e'en to the God
That men implore and barter with in prayer,
And all who breathe must breathe this chargéd fume.
Thus millions wither ere the noon of life

And die in soul long ere we bury them.
The rushing steps that move in crowded marts
Go not of choice, but driven by the lash,
And dare not pause lest they be trampled down.

Here then abides the work of wakened man;
To break the chains that would a brother bind,
And stay the misered hand that now is full,
To draw grim profit's heel from childhood frail,
And lose the women slaves in holes of hell,
To lift the human heart from graves of gold,
And knock unceasingly on temple doors
Where feeble souls have slumbered long,
To plant a rose in every barren breast,
And in the din and tumult of the world
To sing and teach and live the things of love.

The sunshine calmly paints its twilight hues
Each day in still extremities of earth;
And nowhere blooms a leaf but speaks of love;
The stars fret not aglow in mellow night,
And soft peep forth like village lights at eve;
The forest winds resound the melodies
That live alone in quiet, wooded worlds;

O'er ragged mountains, plains and lapping seas,
The silent ships float on the soundless wave;
The nightingale still spends his only song
In noon of night; and wander birds still rove,
As in the olden times, each with his mate;
The quiet moonlight tiptoes o'er the earth,
Like playful water on a sandy beach;
And wand'ring in its noiseless path of gold
Arises olden bliss we knew ere birth,
And silent robes of beauty deck the world,
From tender leaf to twilight's quiet stars.—
O lift us up, thou God of all, to love,
Above the soulless martyrdom of things!
The rushing world is hungry at the heart.

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